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CONTENTS

ENGLISH POETRY IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY, by *F. R. Leavis* — Page 236

THE MADDERMARKET THEATRE, by *T. R. Barnes* — 256

THOMAS HOBBES, by *Michael Oakeshott* — 263

THE CRITICAL WRITINGS OF GEORGE SANTAYANA, by *Q. D. Leavis* — 278

COMMENTS AND REVIEWS — 296

EDITORIAL (p. 296). *The Soul of Man in the Age of Leisure*, reviewed by D.T. (p. 298). A PUBLIC FOR POETRY, *Janus* and *Poems by Louis Macneice*, reviewed by Frank Chapman (p. 299). WILLIAM EMPSON'S VERSE, review by H. A. Mason (p. 302). HUGH MACDIARMID, review by F. R. Leavis (p. 305). *The Poet's Tongue*, reviewed by Denys Thompson (p. 306). *Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us*, reviewed by R. G. Cox (p. 309). *The Achievement of T. S. Eliot*, reviewed by H. A. Mason (p. 311). GROPIUS, *The New Architecture and the Bauhaus*, reviewed by Herbert Read, (p. 313). DOUGHTY AND HOPKINS, review by F. R. Leavis (p. 316). *The Powys Brothers*, reviewed by F.R.L. (p. 318). THE ORAGE LEGEND, review by F.R.L. (p. 319). THE LAST EPICUREAN, *The Last Puritan*, reviewed by Q. D. Leavis (p. 320). *Clear Horizon* (p. 328), *King Coffin* (p. 330), *Beany-Eye* (p. 332), reviewed by Q. D. Leavis. *Chinese Testament* and *The House of Exile*, reviewed (p. 334). *The South Africans*, reviewed (p. 338). *The Golden Grindstone*, reviewed (p. 341).

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ENGLISH POETRY IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY[1]

THE work has been done, the re-orientation effected: the heresies of ten years ago are orthodoxy. Mr. Eliot's achievement is matter for academic evaluation, his poetry is accepted, and his early observations on the Metaphysicals and on Marvell provide currency for university lectures and undergraduate exercises. His own projected book on the School of Donne has come to seem to him unnecessary, and certainly in the last ten years much industry has been devoted to applying and expanding his hints—so that, indeed, one may well be rather shy of reverting to topics that are not, perhaps, yet exhausted. However, the appearance of an *Oxford Book of Seventeenth Century Verse* is an opportunity; an opportunity for a modest employment, over the new perspective, of the surveying and reconsidering eye.

Few who handle the new *Oxford Book* will think of reading it straight through, and fewer will actually read it through, but to persist only moderately in the undertaking is to assure oneself that one valuation at least, and that a key one, among current acceptances needs no downward revision. After ninety pages of (with some minor representation) Fulk Greville, Chapman and Drayton, respectable figures who, if one works through their allotments, serve at any rate to set up a critically useful background, we come to this:

> I wonder by my troth, what thou, and I
> Did, till we lov'd? were we not wean'd till then?

---

[1]*The Oxford Book of Seventeenth Century Verse*, chosen by H. J. C. Grierson and G. Bullough. Oxford. At the Clarendon Press, 8/6.
Rochester: Portrait of a Restoration Poet, by V. de Sola Pinto. The Bodley Head, 8/6.

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> But suck'd on country pleasures, childishly?
> Or snorted we in the seven sleepers den?
> 'Twas so; But this, all pleasures fancies bee.
> If ever any beauty I did see,
> Which I desir'd, and got, 'twas but a dreame of thee.

At this we cease reading as students, or as connoisseurs of anthology-pieces, and read on as we read the living. The extraordinary force of originality that made Donne so potent an influence in the seventeenth century makes him now at once for us, without his being the less felt as of his period, contemporary—obviously a living poet in the most important sense. And it is not any eccentricity or defiant audacity that makes the effect here so immediate, but rather an irresistible rightness.

With all that has been written of late about Donne it is still, perhaps, not altogether easy to realize how powerful an originality is represented by the stanza quoted above. In an age when music is for all classes an important part of daily life, when poets, along with so large a proportion of their fellow-countrymen, are musicians and write their lyrics to be sung, Donne uses in complete dissociation from music a stanza-form that proclaims the union of poetry and music. The dissociation is positive ; utterance, movement and intonation are those of the talking voice. And consider the way in which the stress is got on ' Did,' and the intonation controlled, here:

> I wonder by my troth, what thou, and I
> Did, till we lov'd?

This is the spirit in which Donne uses the stanza-form—for he does indeed strictly use it: the exigencies of the pattern become means to the inevitable naturalness ; they play an essential part in the consummate control of intonation, gesture, movement and larger rhythm. But that Donne is a great artist is now commonly recognized, and we are not likely to hear much more of his harsh and rugged verse and his faults of phrasing and harmony (though no doubt these could still be found). The commonplaces now regard the magnificent handling of the stanza, the building-up of varied cumulative effects within it, exemplified by (say) the *Anniversarie* and *A nocturnall upon S. Lucies day.*

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There remains, perhaps, something to be said about such mastery of tone as is exhibited in (to take the example at which the book happens to be open) *Aire and Angells*—the passage from the gravely gallant and conventional exaltation of the opening to the blandly insolent matter-of-factness of the close. Indeed, the subtleties of Donne's use of the speaking voice and the spoken lauguage are inexhaustible—or might, by a reasonable hyperbole, be called so, if we were not reminded of Shakespeare. For of Shakespeare we are, in fact, notably reminded. Whether or not Donne did actually get anything from dramatic verse can only be a matter of idle speculation, but his own verse—the technique, the spirit in which the sinew and living nerve of English are used—suggests an appropriate development of impressions that his ear might have recorded in the theatre.

And there is, of course, about Donne's characteristic poetry—in the presentment of situations, the liveliness of enactment—something fairly to be called dramatic. *Satyre iii*, which one is glad to find in this *Oxford Book*, very obviously justifies the adjective (though not, perhaps more obviously than many of the poems in stanzas), and the handling in it of the decasyllabic line reminds us peculiarly of dramatic blank verse. Consider, for instance, the way in which Donne here, playing his sense-movement across the rimes, controls his tone and gets his key stresses, coming finally down with retarded emphasis on ' damn'd :

> Are not heavens joyes as valiant to asswage
> Lusts, as earths honour was to them? Alas,
> As wee do them in meanes, shall they surpasse
> Us in the end, and shall thy fathers spirit
> Meete blinde Philosophers in heaven, whose merit
> Of strict life may be imputed faith, and heare
> Thee, whom he taught so easie wayes and neare
> To follow, damn'd?

This art has evident affinities with Shakespeare's; nevertheless Donne is writing something original and quite different from blank verse. For all their apparent casualness, the rimes it should be plain, are strictly *used* ; the couplet-structure, though not in Pope's way, is functional. If, for instance, ' asswage ' had not been a rime-word, there would not have been quite that lagging

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deliberation of stress upon ' lusts ' ; just as, in the following, the riming upon the first syllable of ' blindnesse ' secures a natural speaking stress and intonation and an economy that is the privilege of speech (the effect is: ' this state of blindness—for that's what it amounts to . . . '):

> Careless Phrygius doth abhorre
> All, because all cannot be good, as one
> Knowing some women whores, dares marry none.
> Gracchus loves all as one, and thinkes that so
> As women do in divers countries goe
> In divers habits, yet are still one kinde,
> So doth, so is Religion ; and this blind-
> nesse too much light breeds . . .

Even so short a passage as this suggests the mimetic flexibility for which the whole piece is remarkable. The poised logical deliberation of the first three lines, suggesting the voice of invincibly rational caution, sets off the rakish levity, the bland Restoration insolence, that follows (' So doth, so is . . . '—it is an extraordinarily different logic).

But enough illustration (out of an embarrassment of choice) has been given to bring home how dramatic Donne's use of his medium can be ; how subtly, in a consummately managed verse, he can exploit the strength of spoken English. But it is not enough to leave the stress there; a Donne whose art was fully represented by *Satyre iii* could not have been as important or pervasive an influence in the century as actually he was. He also wrote this:

> Sweetest love, I do not goe,
> For wearinesse of thee,
> Nor in hope the world can show
> A fitter Love for mee ;
> But since that I
> Must dye at last, 'tis best,
> To use my selfe in jest
> Thus by fain'd deaths to dye.

This is not Campion, yet it is a song. And Donne's songs are, through a continuity of intermediate modes, in touch at the other end of the scale with the mode of *Satyre iii*.

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Now you have freely given me leave to love,
What will you do?
Shall I your mirth or passion move,
When I begin to woo ;
Will you torment, or scorn, or love me too?

—Coming on it casually one might, at first reading, very well take this opening stanza for Donne. It is, of course, Thomas Carew—Carew who exemplifies Donne's part in a mode or tradition (or whatever other term may fitly describe that which makes the Court poets a community) inviting to the consideration of other things besides the influence of Donne. Carew, it seems to me, has claims to more distinction that he is commonly accorded ; more than he is accorded by the bracket that, in common acceptance, links him with Lovelace and Suckling. He should be, for more readers than he is, more than an anthology poet (and there is after all the cheap *Muses' Library* edition), and more of him deserves to be current than even this *Oxford Book*, in which he has fifteen pages, gives (I should have liked to find his *In Answer of an Elegiacal Letter, upon the Death of the King of Sweden from Aurelian Townsend inviting me to write on that Subject.*) To say this is not to stress any remarkable originality in his talent ; his strength is representative, and he has individual force enough to be representative with unusual vitality.

The representative quality (with the distinction he manifests in it) is well illustrated by one of his two or three best-known poems :

Know *Celia*, (since thou art so proud,)
'Twas I that gave thee thy renown:
Thou hadst, in the forgotten crowd
Of common beauties, liv'd unknown,
Had not my verse exhal'd thy name,
And with it ympt the wings of fame.

That killing power is none of thine,
I gave it to thy voyce, and eyes:
Thy sweets, thy graces, all are mine ;
Thou art my star, shin'st in my skies ;
Then dart not from thy borrowed sphere
Lightning on him that fixt thee there.

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Tempt me with such affrights no more,
Lest what I made, I uncreate:
Let fools thy mystique forms adore,
Ile know thee in thy mortall state ;
Wise Poets that wrap'd Truth in tales,
Knew her themselves through all her vailes.

This, in its representative quality, is a more distinguished achievement than is perhaps commonly recognized. It is not a mere charming trifle ; it has in its light grace a remarkable strength. How fine and delicate is the poise it maintains may be brought out by looking through Carew's Restoration successors for a poem to compare with it. In its sophisticated gallantry there is nothing rakish or raffish—nothing of the Wild Gallant ; its urbane assurance has in it nothing of the Restoration insolence. What it represents is something immeasurably finer than, after the Civil Wars and the Interregnum, was there—was there at all, by any substitution—for the mob of gentlemen who wrote with ease : it represents a Court culture (if the expression may be permitted as a convenience) that preserved, in its sophisticated way, an element of the tradition of chivalry and that had turned the studious or naïvely enthusiastic Renaissance classicizing and poetizing of an earlier period into something intimately bound up with contemporary life and manners—something consciously both mature and, while contemporary, traditional.

The poem under discussion is included also in Professor Grierson's *Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century*, and it does indeed illustrate the general debt to Donne. Yet that there is another debt is equally apparent: the ' metaphysical ' element is far from obtrusive, being completely subdued to the prevailing urbane elegance ; and while this elegance has fairly obvious social correlations, it could not as a literary mode have been achieved by Carew (or any other of the Court group) if there had been no other major influence besides Donne's. For this influence the acclamation of the age itself leads us to Ben Jonson.

Ben Jonson, we know, is classical : ' classical (Jonson, Milton, even Herrick),' say the editors of the *Oxford Book of Seventeenth Century Verse*, reminding us that there are ways and ways of

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being classical. How different Jonson's way is from Milton's (Herrick we may leave for a while) Mr. L. C. Knights enforces in *Tradition and Ben Jonson*,[1] stressing as he does there Jonson's rooted and racy Englishness. In considering the idiomatic quality of the Caroline lyric, its close relation to the spoken language, we do not find it easy to separate Donne's influence from Jonson's. And in considering Jonson's classicism, we cannot easily separate it from his idiomatic quality. The point is well illustrated by No. 105 in the new *Oxford Book*, the well-known Song *To Celia* that takes the characteristic liberty with *Vivamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus*:

Come my Celia, let us prove,
While wee may, the sports of love ;
Time will not be ours for ever:
He, at length, our good will sever.
Spend not then his gifts in vaine.
Sunnes that set, may rise againe:
But, if once wee lose this light,
'Tis, with us, perpetuall night.
Why should we deferre our joyes?
Fame, and rumor are but toyes.
Cannot we delude the eyes
Of a few poor household spyes?

* * * *

There is in *The Forest* another piece, *To the same*, again paying Catullus the homage of this kind of freedom:

Kiss me, Sweet: the wary lover
Can your favours keep, and cover,
When the common courting jay
All your bounties will betray.
Kiss again: no creature comes.
Kiss, and score up wealthy sums
On my lips, thus hardly sundred,
While you breathe. First give a hundred,
Then a thousand, then another

[1]See *Scrutiny*, September, 1935.

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Hundred, then unto the t'other
Add a thousand, and so more:
Till you equal with the store,
All the grass that Rumney yields,
Or the sands in Chelsea fields,
Or the drops in silver Thames,
Or the stars that gild his streams,
In the silent Summer-nights,
When youths ply their stol'n delights;
That the curious may not know
How to tell 'em as they flow,
And the envious, when they find
What their number is, be pined.

This is inferior, but it exhibits very clearly the spirit in which Jonson classicized: we are reminded of the Augustan way of 'translating' and 'imitating' Horace and Juvenal. Jonson's effort was to feel Catullus, and the others he cultivated, as contemporary with himself; or rather, to achieve an English mode that should express a sense of contemporaneity with them. The sense itself, of course, had to be achieved by effort, and was achieved in the mode. This mode, which is sufficiently realized in a considerable body of poems, may be described as consciously urbane, mature, and civilized. Whatever its relation to any Latin originals, it is indisputably *there*, an achieved actuality. It belongs, of course, to literature, and is the product of a highly refined literary sensibility; yet it is at the same time expressive, if to a large degree by aspiration only, of a way of living. In it the English poet, who remains not the less English and of his own time, enters into an ideal community, conceived of as something with which contemporary life and manners may and should have close relations.

'The direct indebtedness of the courtly poets to Ben Jonson is probably, as Professor Gregory Smith has recently argued, small. But not only Herrick, metaphysical poets like Carew and Stanley and others owe much both of their turn of conceit and their care for form to Jonson's own models, the Latin lyrists, Anacreon, the Greek Anthology, neo-Latin or Humanist poetry, so rich in neat and pretty conceits.'

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—No higher authority in this field than Professor Grierson, from whose Introduction to *Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century* this comes, is to be found, which is the reason for picking the passage from an admirable essay in order respectfully to query it. If so exceptionally qualified a judge thus slights something that seems of the first importance in the poetic tradition of the century, a certain insistence may be permitted here. For the passage quoted does unmistakably suggest a failure to appreciate justly the nature of the achievement that Carew's art represents. The indebtedness to Jonson's models is of a kind that it took Jonson's genius in the first place to incur ; if the later poets learnt from those models, they had learnt from Jonson how to do so.

The achievement was such as to demand all the assertive force of Jonson's genius, his native robustness. How much there was in him not immediately tending towards elegance, grace and urbanity some of the poems included in the new *Oxford Book* reminds us. There are ' Epigrammes ' that are laboured and difficult, tough without felicity. Then there is the Ode *To the immortall memorie, and friendship of that noble paire, Sir Lucius Cary and Sir H. Morison*, reminding us that Jonson's classicizing was that of a scholar, one weightily erudite and inclined to pedantry. Inclined—but there was also an inclination the other way, towards a strong idiomatic naturalness, a racy vigour: Jonson was as robustly interested in men and manners and his own talk as in literature and the poetic art. How strong with what is behind it the urbane grace is, when achieved, comes out well in the following poem, where, in the stopping-short (as it were) on the strong side of the Caroline courtly manner, the strength asserts itself (the poem comes from *Underwoods*, and is not included in the new *Oxford Book*):

Fair friend, 'tis true your beauties move
    My heart to a respect,
Too little to be paid with love,
    Too great for your neglect.

I neither love, nor yet am free,
    For though the flame I find
Be not intense in the degree,
    'Tis of the purest kind.

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It little wants of love but pain ;
Your beauty takes my sense,
And lest you should that price disdain,
My thoughts too feel the influence.

'Tis not a passion's first access,
Ready to multiply ;
But, like love's calmest state, it is
Possest with victory.

It is like love to truth reduced,
All the false values gone,
Which were created and induced
By fond imagination.

'Tis either fancy or 'tis fate,
To love you more than I :
I love you at your beauty's rate,
Less were an injury.

Like unstampt gold, I weigh each grace,
So that you may collect
Th' intrinsic value of your face,
Safely from my respect.

And this respect would merit love,
Were not so fair a sight
Payment enough : for who dare move
Reward for his delight?

The ' tough reasonableness ' of this is felt as a personal quality of Ben Jonson's, a native good sense, but it clearly has intimate relations with the impersonal urbanity and poise that we feel to be the finest fruit of his Latin studies, and the poem, though unmistakably not by one of the courtly poets, is with an equally unmistakable significance, suggestive of them. It took, then, Ben Jonson's powerful genius to initiate the tradition, the common heritage, into which a line of later poets could enter, and by which a very great Augustan poet was to profit long after civilization and literary fashions had been transformed.

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> 'It is more than a technical accomplishment, or the vocabulary or syntax of an epoch ; it is, what we have designated tentatively as wit, a tough reasonableness beneath the slight lyric grace.'

—This, of course, comes from Mr. Eliot's extraordinarily pregnant and decisive essay on Marvell, the very pregnancy, the suggestive compression of which makes it desirable to try and do some disengaging and re-stressing. Immediately before the sentence just quoted Mr. Eliot had written:

> 'The wit of the Caroline poets is not the wit of Shakespeare, and it is not the wit of Dryden, the great master of contempt, or of Pope, the great master of hatred, or of Swift, the great master of disgust. What is meant is some quality which is common to the songs in *Comus* and Cowley's *Anacreontics* and Marvell's *Horatian Ode*.

—'Wit,' as Mr. Eliot reminds us, is a tricky term ; and, in a field as complex as that under contemplation, one can distinguish, define and fix too brutally ; yet the community that associates Jonson, Carew and Marvell can with profit be more narrowly restricted, and so more sharply defined, than it is by that last sentence. The art of the Songs in *Comus* has, no doubt, an affinity with the art of some of Jonson's things—an affinity perhaps, well enough suggested by this insistence on 'art' ; and one may use the term 'wit' to emphasize the remoteness of this art from nineteenth century notions of the lyrical. But the songs in *Comus* have not, in or beneath their simple grace, any such subtle order of implications as leads us to call the apparently simple poise of Jonson 'wit.' As for Cowley, he was 'metaphysical' and, in one of the many possible ways, 'Horatian' ; but all that he ever wrote, in any mode, proclaims him an instrument unattuned to the finenesses in question—unqualified to catch or transmit. Here is the *Anacreontic* given in the new *Oxford Book* (and the representation is fair):

> Fill the *Bowl* with rosie Wine,
> Around out temples *Roses* twine.
> And let us chearfully awhile,

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Like the *Wine* and *Roses* smile.
Crown'd with Roses we contemn
Gyges' wealthy *Diadem.*
To-day is *Ours ;* what do we fear?
To-day is *Ours* ; we have it here.
Let's treat is kindly, that it may
Wish, at least, with us to stay.
Let's banish *Business,* banish *Sorrow* ;
To the *Gods* belongs *Tomorrow.*

—This, in the comparison challenged, seems insensitive in movement and inflection, coarse in tone and heavy in touch. Where Cowley notably does not seem insensitive, in the elegy *On the Death of Mr. William Hervey,* he suggests curiously (and significantly) at one and the same time Spenser, a more tenderly and disinterestedly elegiac Milton, and a purified elegiac strain of the eighteenth century (see Gray's sonnet on Richard Wcst). The simple decency of sentiment, the good sense and the civilized demeanour belong to a very different order from the subtle and supremely civilized poise of Marvell's *Horatian Ode.*

In the *Dialogue between the Resolved Soul and Created Pleasure* the essential relation between this mature poise and the Caroline wit of Carew is even more obvious than in the Ode. There is a crisp gallantry about the movement ; the verse carries itself with an air:

Courage my Soul, now learn to wield
The weight of thine immortal Shield.
Close on thy Head thy Helmet bright.
Ballance thy Sword against the Fight.
See where an Army, strong as fair,
With silken Banners spreads the air.
Now, if thou bee'st that thing Divine,
In this day's Combat let it shine:
And shew that Nature wants an Art
To conquer one resolved Heart.

The closeness of this to Carew's

Know *Celia* (since thou art so proud,)
'Twas I that gave thee thy renown

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is plain. Marvell's theme, stated barely, is that of *Comus*, yet he can in the Choruses, while remaining a whole civilization remote from the Restoration vulgarity, heighten this conscious gallantry of bearing and gesture into something that, though so different—so fine and urbane, suggests the operatic flourish of Dryden's odes:

Soul

Had I but any time lose,
On this I would it all dispose.
Cease Tempter. None can chain a mind
Whom this sweet Chordage cannot bind.

Chorus

Earth cannot shew so brave a Sight
As when a single Soul does fence
The Batteries of alluring Sense,
And Heaven views it with delight.
Then persevere : for still new Charges sound:
And if thou overcom'st thou shalt be crown'd.

—That neat play on 'Chordage,' giving as it does a new force to the conventional figure of being held in bonds of music, reminds us that a strain of the metaphysical is, in this mode, blent into the subtle elegance, the urbane grace. There is no need to explain at length why Marvell's poem produces an effect so different from that of *Comus*. Milton's moral theme is held simply and presented with single-minded seriousness ; Marvell presents his in relation to a wide range of varied and maturely valued interests that are present implicitly in the wit, and his seriousness is the finer wisdom of a ripe civilization.

In Pope the line ends—the line that runs from Ben Jonson and, in the way illustrated, associates Jonson's influence with Donne's. Pope is a very varied as well as a very great poet, and the quality that relates him to Marvell may be found in different blends. Here (since one instance must suffice) we have it plain in one of the best-known of passages:

She comes! she comes! the sable Throne behold
Of *Night* primæval and of *Chaos* old!
Before her, *Fancy's* gilded clouds decay,
And all its varying Rain-bows die away.

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Wit shoots in vain its momentary fires,
The meteor drops, and in a flash expires.
As one by one, at dread Medea's strain
The sick'ning stars fade off th' ethereal plain ;
As Argus' eyes by Hermes' wand opprest,
Clos'd one by one to everlasting rest ;
Thus at her felt approach, and secret might,
Art after *Art* goes out, and all is Night.
See skulking *Truth* to her old cavern fled,
Mountains of Casuistry heap'd o'er her head!
Philosophy, that lean'd on Heav'n before,
Shrinks to her second cause, and is no more.
Physic of *Metaphysic* begs defence,
And *Metaphysic* calls for aid on *Sense*!
See *Mystery* to *Mathematics* fly!
In vain! they gaze, turn giddy, rave, and die.
Religion blushing veils her sacred fires,
And unawares *Morality* expires.
For *public* flame, nor *private,* dares to shine;
Nor *human* Spark is left, nor Glimpse *divine*!

—The affinity with the mode of Marvell's Dialogue should be fairly obvious. The weight behind that concluding passage of *The Dunciad* is greater than Marvell could supply and the urbanity has a different inflection, but the relation between wit and solemnity (Pope is deeply moved by his vatic nightmare—that is, by his positive concern for civilization) is essentially that of the Dialogue.

The line, then, runs from Ben Jonson (and Donne) through Carew and Marvell to Pope. But, in spite of the recent readjustment of perspective, Mr. Waller's service in reforming our numbers still distracts from the recognition of this line, and the succession Waller, Denham, Dryden, Pope still commonly gets the stress. And this succession does of course represent a decisive development in the century—the development that makes Cowley seem a significant figure (he was found a great poet by his own age) and, in his very insufficiency, more representative than Marvell. The last point may be best enforced, not by enlisting Dr. Johnson and bringing up examples of Cowley's ' metaphysical ' extravagance, but by turning to the poem *Of Wit,* which exemplifies Cowley's essential

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good sense. In that poem he discusses and expounds wit in a manner and spirit quite out of resonance with the metaphysical mode—quite alien and uncongenial to it ; with a reasonableness that has little to do with the ' tough reasonableness ' underlying Marvell's lyric grace (a grace of which Cowley has nothing). It is a spirit of good sense, of common sense ; appealing to criteria that the coming age will refine into ' Reason, Truth and Nature.' The verse-mode implicitly desiderated, as it were, is a polite one, intimately related to manners and a social code: it is that, in short, with the initiation of which the Augustans credited Mr. Waller.

The suave refinement of the polite mode represented by Waller is in its very nature something less fine and sensitive (the inferiority is immediately apparent in the movement and texture of the verse) than the urbane grace of Carew (to make him representative). The taste to which it appeals has limitations of the general kind intimated by ' fine ear ' as used in this sentence from the Preface to the new *Oxford Book*: ' Palgrave's chief and best guide was Tennyson, on whose fine ear the metres of the " metaphysicals " must have grated as did those of his friend Browning . . .'.

Dryden's genius, it is true, comes out in a certain native English strength ; the strength that led Hopkins to say of him: ' he is the most masculine of our poets ; his style and his rhythms lay the strongest stress of all our literature on the naked thew and sinew of the English language . . .'[1] Though Hopkins, I think, overstates, that kind of strength is certainly there. Yet the kind of inferiority referred to strikes us at once if we compare Dryden s verse with Pope's. Pope's greater strictness of versification is popularly supposed to mean greater monotony ; actually, manifesting as it does a much greater fineness and profundity of organization, a much greater intensity of art, it is the condition of a much, an immeasurably, greater variety. This superiority of Pope establishes itself incontestably if we place alongside the passage of *The Dunciad* quoted above for its affinity with Marvell the opening of *Mac Flecknoe* (the comparison may not seem fair, but would it, whatever passage of Dryden were chosen?). Above every line of Pope we can imagine a tensely flexible and complex curve, representing the modulation, emphasis and changing tone and tempo of the voice in

[1] *The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges*, CLV.

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reading ; the curve varying from line to line and the lines playing subtly against one another. The verse of *Mac Flecknoe,* in the comparison, is both slack and monotonous ; again and again there are awkward runs and turns, unconvinced and unconvincing, requiring the injected rhetorical conviction of the declaimer to carry them off.

The comparison, of course, *is* unfair: Dryden's effects are all for the public ear—for the ear in public (so to speak). And this is true not only of his pamphleteering verse, but also (for instance) of his blank verse in *All for Love* when compared with Shakespeare's: appropriately true, it might be said, for what more can one demand of dramatic verse than that it should be good verse of the theatre, giving nothing more than, well declaimed, can be appreciated on a first hearing? So Dryden's satiric pamphlets were, we can see, magnificently effective for their purpose ; and, read in the appropriate spirit, they are magnificently effective now. But the appropriate spirit is not that which Pope demands ; we are not to strain the inner ear (if the convenient expression may be allowed to pass) as if, behind the immediate effect, there were a fine organization.

The point about Dryden, the great representative poet of the later seventeenth century, may be brought out by comparing him, in what might for the immediate purpose be called the social quality of his verse, with Ben Jonson. The community to which Jonson as a poet belongs is, though (as we have seen) brought into relation with the life and manners of his time, predominantly ideal ; membership is the achievement of creative effort. Jonson's greater fineness and his more assertive robustness go together. The community to which Dryden belongs as a poet is that in which he actually lives, moves, eats and talks ; and he belongs to it so completely and, with its assurance of being sophisticated and civilized (it on the point of considering itself truly Augustan—that is, as attaining and realizing afresh a kind of absolute of civilization), it is so completely engrossing that he has no ear, no spiritual antennae, for the other community. One has more conviction in calling him a great representative poet than in calling him a great poet, for he is certainly a great representative. He may be a greater poet than Marvell, but he did not write any poetry as indubitably great as Marvell's best.

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Pope's peculiar greatness is that he can be a complete Augustan, realizing in his poetry the strength of that actual concentrated civilization immediately around him, and at the same time, as we have seen, achieve a strength so closely related to Marvell's. And it is a very great poet indeed of whom we can say that, writing under George I, he is very much closer to Donne than Dryden is.

Some of the considerations above have touched fairly directly on that now familiar topic, the ' dissociation of sensibility.' Something that might well be covered by the phrase is the development, in the spirit of Waller's ' reform,' of a verse that, as was loosely said, appeals only to the public—or, it might be better to say, social—ear. Mr. Eliot, who put the phrase into currency, ascribed the dissociation very largely to the influence of Dryden and Milton. Dryden is the voice of his age and may be said to have, in that sense, responsibility. And even without reference forward to the eighteenth century the coupling of his name with Milton's can be readily justified. Dryden's admiration for Milton and the proofs offered in Dryden's verse of the sincerity and practical force of that admiration are significant: he is truly representative and in admiring Milton's magniloquence (as Mr. Eliot calls it) he is indicating what sort of taste for the exalted will complement the taste that sees in Mr. Waller the discoverer of the poetic norm. The Restoration itself has Dryden's odes and heroic plays: it is left for the eighteenth century to derive its exalted public decorum of poetry from Milton (who in Gray's Pindaric odes is inseparable from Dryden).

A serious attempt to account for the ' dissociation of sensibility ' would turn into a discussion of the great change that came over English civilization in the seventeenth century—the change notably manifested in the decisive appearance of modern English prose during the early years of the Restoration. Social, economic and political history, the Royal Society, Hobbes, intellectual and cultural history in general—a great and complex variety of considerations would be involved. Regarding the decay of the Caroline courtly tradition come obvious reflections present themselves—for it is patently decay that any representative handful of Restoration lyrics illustrates. Charles II was a highly intelligent man of liberal interests, and his mob of gentlemen cultivated conversation and the Muses. But that the old fine order, what was referred to above

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as the ' Court culture,' did not survive the period of disruption, exile and ' travels ' is apparent even in the best things of Etherege, Sedley, Rochester and the rest: the finest specimens of the tenderly or cynically gallant and polite lack the positive fineness, the implicit subtlety, examined above in Carew. The cheaper things remind us forcibly that to indicate the background of Restoration poetry we must couple with the Court, not as earlier the country house, but the coffee-house, and that the coffee-house is on intimate terms with the Green Room.

We are given a good view of this background in Professor Pinto's book on Rochester, and the background explains, perhaps, why we have to disagree with Professor Pinto's estimate of Rochester as a poet: 'If Milton is the great poet of belief in the seventeenth century, Rochester is the great poet of unbelief.' Rochester is not a great poet of any kind ; yet he certainly had uncommon natural endowments, which, it is reasonable to suggest, he might have done much more with had he been born thirty years earlier. As it is, his few best lyrics are peculiarly individual utterances, with no such relation to convention or tradition as is represented by Carew or Marvell—a point that Professor Grierson makes in his introduction to *Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century* when he says (p. xxxviii)

' When wearied with a world of woe,

might have been written by Burns with some differences.' It is in his satires that Rochester belongs decidedly to a tradition ; they are very striking at their best and bear a close relation to some manners of Pope.

As for the tradition of wit and grace in the lyric—after Etherege, Sedley and Rochester (contemporaries, it may be significantly noted, of Dryden, Tom D'Urfey and Aphra Behn) we get Prior. And if we compare Prior's *To a Child of Quality* (No. 423 in the *Oxford Book of English Verse*) with Marvell's *The Picture of little T.C. in a Prospect of Flowers* we realize how great was the loss when the tradition died—died so completely—into the modes, into the conventions of sentiment and expression, of a new age.

* * * *

The impression of the period as an incomparably rich one is strongly confirmed by the survey. Donne, Ben Jonson, Herbert,

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Milton, Marvell, Dryden—it is a matchless array ; and the lesser figures show, by their number and quality, how remarkably favourable to the development of its talent the century was. To start with Donne and Ben Jonson together was luck indeed; either was qualified to be a decisive force. Without Jonson behind him what would Herrick (still an overrated figure) have been? The point of the instance lies in the very triviality of Herrick's talent, which yet produced something not altogether negligible (beside him Carew looks like a major poet). Herrick, too, in his trivially charming way,[1] illustrates the advantages poetry enjoyed in an age in which a poet could be 'classical' and in touch with a living popular culture at the same time.

In both parts of the century the poet was practising an art that had important social functions, recognizable as such by the many (there are Dryden's verse pamphlets to be remembered here as well as Jacobean drama).

F. R. LEAVIS.

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[1]If this phrase is thought to need justifying, the following comparison should suffice.

The Rose was sick and smiling died ;
And, being to be sanctified,
About the bed there sighing stood
The sweet and flowery sisterhood:
Some hung the head, while some did bring,
To wash her, water from the spring;
Some laid her forth, while others wept,
But all a solemn fast there kept:
The holy sisters, some among,
The sacred dirge and trental sung.
But ah! what sweets smelt everywhere,
As Heaven had spent all perfumes there.
At last, when prayers for the dead
And rites were all accomplished,
They, weeping, spread a lawny loom,
And closed her up as in a tomb.

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That is Herrick's *The Funeral Rites of the Rose*. And this is a piece of Marvell:

> See how the flowers, as at parade,
> Under their colours stand display'd:
> Each regiment in order grows,
> That of the tulip, pink, and rose.
> But when the vigilant patrol
> Of stars walks round about the pole,
> Their leaves, that to the stalks are curl'd,
> Seem to their staves the ensigns furl'd.
> Then in some flower's belovèd hut
> Each bee, as sentinel, is shut,
> And sleeps so too; but if once stirred,
> She runs you through, nor asks the word.

Now both of these may be fairly described as charmingly and gracefully playful. But it should be plain at once that Marvell's in its playfulness has a strength that Herrick's has not—a seriousness that does not make it less playful and light. Herrick's game, Herrick's indulgence, in fact, is comparatively solemn; it does not refer us outside itself. 'Let us,' he virtually says, 'be sweetly and deliciously sad,' and we are to be absorbed in the game, the 'solemn' rite. There is in Herrick's verse nothing of the crisp movement, nothing of the alert bearing, that, carrying as it does in its poise the element represented by 'And sleeps so too,' we recognize in Marvell's verse as the familiar urbane wit. What Marvell is doing is implicitly 'placed'; not in the least solemn, he is much more serious. So he can, without any incongruity, any effect of an odd or uneasy transition, go on to a development such as is inconceivable in Herrick:

> O thou, that dear and happy Isle,
> The garden of the world erewhile,
> Thou Paradise of the four seas
> Which Heaven planted us to please,
> But, to exclude the world, did guard
> With wat'ry if not flaming sword;
> What luckless apple did we taste
> To make us mortal and thee waste!

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Unhappy! shall we never more
That sweet militia restore,
When gardens only had their towers,
And all the garrisons were flowers;
When roses only arms might bear,
And men did rosy garlands wear?

Yet even in Herrick there is something that makes all the difference between him and (say) Mr. W. H. Davies. That game we feel also as an exercise in the art of verse; we are aware at the same time of an attitude towards that art, and in that attitude we have the presence of Ben Jonson.

THE MADDERMARKET THEATRE

THE Maddermarket Theatre, home of the Norwich Players, was opened in 1921. It is owned and controlled by Mr. Nugent Monck. He designed the stage, and he produces the plays there, and he lives on the proceeds (such as they are).

The Norwich Players, who were founded by Mr. Monck some years before the acquisition of the Maddermarket gave them a fully equipped stage to work on, are a company of amateur actors. They are bound by no specified ideals ; they have no theories about the place of Drama in Society, and express no desire to educate, reform or modify, the taste, the morals or the political ideals of their audience. They are a collection of persons who like acting, and who are prepared to give a great deal of time and hard work to their hobby. Their names do not appear on the programme. There are no curtain calls, and no flowers by request. The aim of the Maddermarket is, what the aim of every intelligent theatre always has been, the strange business of amusing *les honnêtes gens*.

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Here one must anticipate a cry (by this time, I feel, getting a little monotonous) that in this age there are no *honnêtes gens.* At least, of course, there's you, and me: but you want rather more than two or three gathered together before you can make a theatre pay. Drama, alone among the arts, depends, not only for its existence but for its vitality, on spontaneous support from ordinary people. The theatre is a place where one pays to be amused (or to have æsthetic experiences, if you prefer it that way). It's your money the manager wants. And if you won't go to the theatre because you like it, he must try and exploit other motives to get you inside. He may run his theatre on intellectual snobbery, genuine Pilsner *sous pression,* and a very bad imitation of what his clients will imagine to be a real high-life restaurant like the people in *Vogue* go to. Or he may appeal to one stratum of his potential audience (one group), and bombard this selected few with ideas already familiar to them, but which they like to hear repeated. This may be classified as the ritual appeal. It can't have any genuine vitality, because it hasn't got its roots in anything ; it is psychologically akin to the preciosity satirized by Molière. Another stock solution of the economic problem is afforded by those repertory companies which are content to be tentatively middle-brow (Milne, Barry, Priestley, Brownings, Brontës and Abraham Lincoln) with a little strong ' modern ' stuff (Maugham and Galsworthy) thrown in. The first two methods are only possible in very big towns, or places where there is a large specialized audience ready-made ; the second works moderately well because it has the advertisement value of the commercial fiction racket behind it.

The Maddermarket Theatre does none of these things, because its economic structure differs from that of the ordinary theatre. The curse of the average amateur dramatic society is the casting committee, which is chiefly preoccupied not with the play in hand, but with what people will think, and with trying not, or trying (as the case may be) to hurt other people's feelings. You can't get art out of a committee. Besides they mostly have assorted nobility and gentry on their board of patrons, and the necessity they are under of giving their profits to charity ties their hands. The professional company must pay its way or else close down. Now there are people who will go to see good plays because they like

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them, but there are not many of these people—too few in any but a really big town to support an ordinary professional theatre confining itself to intelligent plays ; and so usually this potential audience is wasted. Mr. Monck succeeds in using it.

The population of Norwich is rather more than 120,000. The Maddermarket seats about 240 people. The players give eight or nine shows a season, from September to May ; that is they rehearse for three weeks and act for one week in each month. An average ' house ' is 170 to 190, and average takings about £25 a night (seats range from 1/6 to 5/-). As the only professional staff consists of one seamstress, one charwoman, and the producer, this just about keeps things going. The Maddermarket is absolutely self-supporting ; but not so expensive to run that it is dependent for its existence on the patronage of the half-witted.

The building which is now the Maddermarket Theatre has had an odd history. It was originally a Roman Catholic Church, built in the eighteenth century on the site of the old Madder Market, where madder was sold to dye the woollen goods for which in the middle ages Norwich was famous. After the new Roman Catholic Cathedral was built in Norwich at the end of the last century, the old church was desecrated. It became a baking-powder factory, then a Salvation Army meeting-hall, and, finally, derelict. Before Nugent Monck made it into a theatre, it was simply a large, almost square building, with inside a gallery running round three walls ; in short it roughly resembled in general lay-out the inn yard, where, as all readers of short Histories of English Literature well know, strolling companies of Elizabethan actors used to perform.

Now Mr. Monck, who had worked years ago with William Poel, had always wanted an Elizabethan stage ; not for sentimental or archæological reasons, but because he believed, and has since triumphantly proved, that it is the cheapest, most flexible and most artistically satisfactory form of stage for a small theatre. So he built a stage out from the ungalleried wall (where the high altar had been) ; put a gallery across that wall, at a slightly lower level from the one on the other three sides; flanked this gallery on each side with a door below and a window above ; built a canopy over the top, supported by two pillars, springing from the stage at about three quarters of its width from the back ; so

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that the whole effect looks not unlike the stock reconstruction of the Elizabethan playhouse.

The stage is open to the audience, and there is no proscenium arch, though the two pillars and canopy can serve as one when necessary ; and a curtain drawn between them effectively conceals the rest of the stage.

It is very difficult to describe in words the effect of all this in practice ; but it is quite unlike the ordinary theatre. The actors do not appear to be in a brilliantly lit box, but seem more three-dimensional, and more natural than they do on other stages. The settings form, as it were, a screen in front of which they perform. But in spite of this intimacy and naturalness, the actors (as they should) seem to inhabit a world of their own. The separation between play and audience is created by light, rather than by the structure of the theatre. One can look at the picture without being perpetually reminded of the frame. One gets an impression of height and space which is almost always lacking in the box stage, however painstaking the scenery is; the picture is higher than it is wide—a shape which is more dramatic (if one may speak of a dramatic shape); on stages, for example, like that of the Festival Theatre, which is longer than it is wide, you get the effect of a frieze, which is narrative, not dramatic.

Settings are not ' realistic.' Their object is to provide a harmonious background for the play. So with the lighting, the costumes and the actors. Mr. Monck's object is unity. The producer, he believes, should be to the play as the conductor is to the musical score ; his aim should be to give a faithful interpretation of the work before him ; nothing must stand out on its own as the production, but every thing be harmonized, and subordinated to the play itself.

Elizabethan plays are therefore usually dressed in Elizabethan or Italian Renaissance costume. Costumes for the Roman plays, for example, are adapted from historical paintings by people like Veronese ; costume designs by Inigo Jones are used for Ariel and Puck and Oberon ; Elizabethan music is used ; and ' Where the bee sucks ' is sung to the composer's tune, and not to Dr. Arne's Handelized version of it. But art and not archæology is always the critterion ; and one is spared the sight of Macbeth in cross-

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gartered trousers and horns sprouting from his hat.

Perhaps some idea of the flexibility of the stage can be obtained from a description of one scene, which stock productions nearly always cut. The shipwreck in *The Tempest* was staged in the gallery, which represented the deck of the ship. From the edge of the gallery hung a sheet of gauzy grey material which stretched out to the pillars, and was held by sprites who danced to the sound of a 'solemn music,' making the gauze undulate, while the boatswain roared and blasphemed above. At the end of the scene, two of the sprites drew a curtain between the two pillars ; Prospero and Miranda went straight on, while the gauze and the ship were cleared away ; and when Ariel appeared he drew the curtain revealing Prospero's grotto beneath the gallery.

The peculiarly 'Elizabethan' features of the stage can easily be masked when necessary. I have never seen any stage with, or without permanent setting, which can be so completely altered in appearance and atmosphere.

What of the audience? They will go to see Shakespeare ; Mr. Monck has now produced all the plays ; and of late years the audience has shown a tendency to take the lesser known Shakespeare on trust, and come and see it in almost as large numbers as they do for *As You Like It* or *The Merchant of Venice*. *Pericles*, for example, was a great success. And they will also go to see Shaw. But they don't go in great numbers to the other Elizabethans, or to genuinely interesting modern plays like *Six Characters*, or to anything they haven't heard of. Even after fourteen years they still don't risk anything new ; about one play a season can be put on purely and solely 'for love.' Official interest in the city is lukewarm and clerical interest is nil—except for country parsons who come to matinées. If you ask a policeman where the place is, he probably won't be able to tell you. Mr. Monck is much better known outside the city boundaries than he is within them, and this story illustrates both these points very prettily.

A party of American undergraduates were touring England ; they came to Norwich and were shown round by the gentleman in charge of the city publicity office. After leaving the Church of St. John Maddermarket they passed down a narrow alley on their way to the Strangers' Hall (an old house, now a museum).

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Halfway down this alley is the entrance to the theatre. The Americans noticed it, cried with one voice, ' There's the Maddermarket,' seized their unwilling guide, took him in, showed him round, and told him all about the place.

One of the difficulties connected with his audience Mr. Monck has now overcome. They would not, originally, come to first nights. They wanted to see what the press said. (East Anglia is very like that). So he instituted the ' Maddermarket Mondays,' and guaranteed his patrons a show every other Monday night during the season. On one Monday a month the show is given by anyone interesting he can afford to engage. It may be anything—dancing, miming, chamber music: the next Monday, of course, is the first night of the Players' performance. Your seat, anywhere in the house, costs you thirty shillings for thirteen shows—one free and the rest at half a crown a time. Here is your winter entertainment arranged for you, and very cheap at the price. In spite of all this the ' Mondays ' are run at a slight loss ; but they are considered worth it (they have been going for nine years now) because they are good publicity and get a fairly reasonable house on Mondays.

Here is this season's programme, as a kind of sample:

October 7th (Monday only):
The English Folk Dance and Song Society.

October 14th to 19th:
*' Within the Gates.' Sean O'Casey.

November 11th to 16th:
*' Viceroy Sarah.' Norman Ginsberg.

November 25th (Monday only):
The Dance Drama Group.

December 9th to 14th:
*' Lady Precious Stream.' S. F. Hsuing.

December 30th and 31st (three performances):
The Peep Show. Walter Wilkinson's Puppets.

January 20th to 25th:
*' The Tempest.'

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February 3rd (Monday only):
A Recital of Modern Part-Songs.

February 17th to 22nd:
*' The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles.' Bernard Shaw.

March 2nd (Monday only):
Intimate Opera.

March 16th to 21st:
*' Tobias and the Angel.' James Bridie.

April 20th to 25th:
*' The Last Voyage.' Edward and Theo Thompson.

May 18th to 23rd:
*' All's Well that Ends Well.'

The asterisks indicate shows given by the Players.

Mr. Monck is, I think, justified in calling this ' the kind of entertainment which cannot possibly be found in any other theatre in England.'

It would be useless to catalogue the plays he has done during the last fourteen years. They include works from every period in English and European classical and modern drama. I have perhaps rather laboured the economic side of the Maddermarket; but I think it is important. But that in itself would lead nowhere. The chief thing about the theatre is that its director is a man of culture and intelligence and a very great interpretative artist.

T. R. Barnes.

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THOMAS HOBBES

THE story of the fortunes of Hobbes and his writings is not remarkable. He was attacked by his contemporaries with a ferocity which reflects not only their sense of outrage but also their sense of danger ; his writings were rejected, not because they were bad philosophy, but because they were thought to have dangerous tendencies; his doctrines, or many of them, were then appropriated by other writers, their authorship first unacknowledged and then forgotten ; his name began to appear in the works which passed for histories of philosophy, but only his name ; towards the end of the nineteenth century there was a revival of interest in the man and his philosophy, a scholar's revival and part of a general revival of interest in the past of English philosophy, bringing with it, not only some of the best studies of Hobbes's writings (*e.g.*, those of Tönnies and Robertson), discoveries of unpublished MSS., and a collected edition of his works, but also the beginning of what is called ' Hobbes research ' ; and then, quite recently, there was the discovery that Hobbes had a message for to-day, and with this discovery came a flood of fresh literature and the foundation, in 1929 after an international congress in Oxford, of a Hobbes Society. It is a common, if slightly sordid, history ; and perhaps it is difficult to determine which part of it is the more sordid, the death or the exhumation. Side by side with this story, however, must be put another, not so long, but less inglorious: the story of his actual influence upon philosophical speculation, for it would be safe to say that he was never without readers. Leibnitz admired his profundity ; in spite of the dominating figure of Locke, Diderot, at least among the *Encyclopédistes,* recognized his master, and Rousseau his creditor ; Hegel, in a few brilliant pages in his *Geschichte der Philosophie,* appreciated his genius ; he was the acknowledged father, in modern times, of English and German materialism ; and his place in the Saints' Calendar of Rationalism was never disputed, though there is little or no evidence to support the view that Hobbes was a pioneer of Natural Religion and Rational Theology. As is so often

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the case, Hobbes was more profoundly appreciated by those who were content to read his writings than by those whose attention was directed to raising a public memorial to him.

The purpose of this article, however, is not to review the fortunes of Hobbes's philosophy, but to consider this contemporary interest in Hobbes and to consider the quality and effect of some of the more recent studies of his work. And in what I have to say I shall confine myself to the publications of the last ten years.[1] The questions I want to ask are, What have we learnt? and, What have we still to learn?

There are certain elements in the contemporary interest in Hobbes's writings which, since Hobbes is a philosopher, I should regard as unhealthy. In the first place, we are met with the suggestion that Hobbes is a writer whose work is peculiarly apposite to the post-war world. 'Hobbes's philosophy,' we are told, 'possessed precisely that character of balance and common-sense that made him foresee the Great War, and, furthermore, the subsequent striving for peace resulting from a comprehension of the disastrous consequences of hate and murder. A number of scholars emphasized the fact that the present pacifist movement fulfils the dreams of this great enemy of war.' Now this attitude towards the writings of such a man as Hobbes is, to say the least, both dangerous and unprofitable, because it directs our attention

[1] I have selected the following books, pamphlets and articles: F. Tönnies, *Thomas Hobbes, Leben und Lehre*. 3rd edition (1925); F. Brandt, *Thomas Hobbes' Mechanical Conception of Nature* (1928); A. Levi, *La Filosofia di Tommaso Hobbes* (1929); Z. Lubienski, *Die Grundlagen des ethisch-politischen Systems von Hobbes* (1932); H. Schreihager, *Thomas Hobbes' Sozialtheorie* (1933); J. Laird, *Hobbes* (1934); Karl Schmitt, *Politische Theologie* (1934); Gierke, *Natural Law and the Theory of Society*, tr. Barker (1934); B. Willey, *The Seventeenth Century Background* (1934); E. F. Carritt, *Morals and Politics* (1935); P. Doyle, *The Contemporary Background of Hobbes' State of Nature*, in *Economica*, Dec., 1927; Z. Lubienski, *Hobbes' Philosophy and its Historical Background*, in *Journal of Philosophical Studies*, April, 1930; L. Strauss, *Quelques Remarques sur la Science Politique de Hobbes*, in *Recherches Philosophique*, 1932.

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towards all that is most superficial and least significant in those writings. Every man, I suppose, has his political opinions, and sometimes they are opinions which will interest and inspire ages other than his own. But a political philosopher has something more, and more significant, than political opinions: he has an analysis of political activity, a comprehensive view of the nature of political life, and it is this, and not his political opinions, which it is profitable for a later and different age to study. And if it is contended that these political opinions belong themselves to that analysis, it must, nevertheless, remain a mistake to lift a few of them out of the system of his thought and give them an independent existence just because when regarded in this way they seem to meet present needs. And were we content to go back to Hobbes's writings and enquire what he means by ' war ' (for example), we could scarcely avoid the conclusion that from this (in any case superficial) standpoint his views are no more significant at the present time than at any other moment in the history of mankind. I mean, briefly, that, in general, the only healthy attitude towards the writings of a philosopher is a philosophical attitude. Of course it is possible to take snippets from the writings of any man and use them as texts for a sermon ; but do not let us confuse this with a study of his works or even with a genuine attempt to discover the present significance of those works.

But this attitude towards philosophical writing is to be found in a more radical form in some of the recent treatments of Hobbes's philosophy. There is not merely the suggestion that the significant meaning of his work lies in a few of his less impressive remarks, but the suggestion that, in the ordinary sense, his writing has no meaning at all. ' Metaphysical utterances which appear to be statements of " fact " are disguised imperatives, or at least disguised optatives ; our studies of the philosophers would be more remunerative if we went to them, not for ' truth,' but in order to discern what particular *fiat* or *utinam* their teaching implies,' writes Mr. Basil Willey. And he follows it up with the remark that ' very nearly every statement of Hobbes can be reduced either to hatred and contempt or schoolmen and clerics, or to fear of civil war and love of ordered living in a stable commonwealth.' Now, that words have an emotive as well as a referential use has, of course, been known long enough ; it was recognized by Hobbes himself,

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for example (*Leviathan*, p. 525). But it appears to have been reserved for more modern times to resolve all language into emotive symbols ; and this resolution, involving a self-contradiction and carrying with it a philosophy of misology (if the phrase may pass), makes, I think, an unsatisfactory foundation upon which to base our study of a philosophic writer. And when we pass from the general view to the particular illustration, the unprofitableness of this view no longer remains in any doubt: it is difficult to understand how anyone who had considered Hobbes's writings could consent to (much less suggest) this absurd ' reduction ' ; it is not even plausible. All the complexity of Hobbes's thought is swept aside as irrelevant ; what cannot be reduced to hate or fear is not Hobbes. I suppose it is impossible to prevent a misological critic from exercising his wits upon the writings of Hobbes, and something interesting may come of it in the end ; but what comes of it will never be a satisfactory interpretation of Hobbes's meaning. And from anyone who undertakes a *tour de force* of this kind we may perhaps ask for something more brilliant. Certainly ' it is salutary to remind ourselves that in the *Leviathan* Hobbes has a " suasive " purpose,' but to find nothing but this in the *Leviathan*, and to conclude from our reading that ' almost in Chinese fashion, he is bringing doctrines to a pragmatic test. Do they or do they not make for the maintenance of lawful authority? he is asking,' suggests that a closer attention might be given to the text. That philosophers often entertain ambitions extraneous to philosophy is known well enough, and that some of them appear to be unable to prevent these ambitions from contaminating their writings is a sad fact ; but to select one of these extraneous purposes—that of the preacher—as the significant characteristic of a piece of philosophic writing appears to me to indicate a misconceived approach to the study of philosophy, and the result is likely to be anything but remunerative.

Now, if the philosophical study of a philosophy excludes this kind of attitude, it does not exclude what may be called a genuinely historical attitude. The detailed consideration of the actual meaning of a philosophical text, regardless of its present significance or of any view we may hold about the truth or error it contains, is certainly valuable ; and, as we shall see, some of the best recent work on Hobbes is of this character. Hobbes, in

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the past, has suffered from a deficiency rather than an excess of this kind of study. There are now plenty of excellent biographies, not a few good expositions of the general outline of his system and some interesting studies of his connexion with earlier and later thought; what we need is more of those detailed, and at least partly historical, studies and interpretations of his work. But the philosophical study of philosophy does, I think, exclude what may be called a *merely* historical study. There is, probably, less place for a merely antiquarian interest in philosophy than elsewhere ; for what elsewhere is merely harmless and at worst an eccentricity, in philosophy becomes dangerous and positively misleading. There will always be new philosophy, and what is new may be valuable even if it is inferior to what we have already. It is the business of philosophy continuously to renew itself. And such new philosophy may arise from the study of what belongs to an earlier time ; and the study of what belongs to an earlier time is profitable, in the end, only when it is related to a genuine renaissance. But the study, if it is to result in anything valuable, must be close: it is only by this detailed study of a philosophical text that it can become, not merely an inheritance, but an inspiration for fresh thought. Whether Hobbes's writings, when studied in this way, can ever yield the philosophical inspiration which has come from (for example) either Plato or Spinoza, is a question which admits of considerable doubt ; but, in any case, it cannot be answered in advance, and the attempt (if it attracts us) is worth making.[1]

Setting on one side, then, these wilder and more wilful treatments of the philosophy of Hobbes, let us consider what we have got from our less speculative investments. Perhaps the most remarkable of our acquisitions—remarkable because it now appears odd

[1]In at least one respect Professor Laird appears to incline to the opinion that Hobbes can never be a source of philosophical inspiration of this kind. He writes, ' we should probably be wiser if we regarded him, not as a living influence, but as voice from the past whose clarity and incisiveness in a host of particular questions is a perpetual refreshment and a persistent incitement to the *un*thinking of many prejudices and to the *re*thinking of moral theory.' *(op. cit.* p. 289.)

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that we should have had to wait so long for it—is a surer grasp of the connexion between Hobbes and the philosophy, particularly the political philosophy, of the Middle Ages. And perhaps this may be regarded as just one more detail in the mass of evidence that has now been accumulated to support the view that the revolution in politics, religion and philosophy which was believed to have taken place during the seventeenth century has (at any rate as regards its speed and comprehensiveness) been grossly exaggerated. It is surprising now to turn back to those older studies of Hobbes and find him coupled with Bacon ; and to have got rid of this misunderstanding puts us on the high road to a truer interpretation of his system as a whole. Perhaps we were misled by Hobbes's polemics against the schoolmen and by his personal connexion with Bacon into this belief that he was a writer who owed little or nothing to the Middle Ages and that he might be placed among the forerunners of modern science. But, whatever the cause of the error, it may now be said to have perished finally. And Professor Laird's recent book does more than record the death of this misconception ; it has the great merit of providing an interpretation of Hobbes's work which recognizes the implications of this change of view. In an age when philosophy was giving way at every point to science, Hobbes stood firm: he had probably less patience or sympathy for experimental science than for anything else in the world—not excluding the Pope. In detail he rejected the whole of the scholastic view, and he was among the first to subject that view to a thorough-going criticism. And of all his contemporaries Galileo seems to have had greatest influence upon him. But his conception of the nature of philosophy and of philosophical argument was much more nearly related to that of Scholasticism than to the view of Bacon and his successors. Indeed, Hobbes was much too shrewd a thinker to reject as completely as he pretended to reject, without discrimination or consideration, the whole legacy of the scholastic philosophy. He was acutely aware of its weakness, but he knew it to be, in part at least, a genuine philosophy ; and the expressions of hostility towards it which he allows himself arise, mainly, from an extraneous, non-philosophical interest and, if anything is to be neglected, must be neglected by a true interpretation of his work. Writing of Hobbes's immediate predecessors, Professor Laird remarks that ' every one

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of these authors would have admitted that Hobbes had played his hand without revoking. And the game that they all played had also been played by Hildebrand, Aquinas, Gerson, Occam and Calvin—old-fashioned players, no doubt, but players who always knew how many trumps were out.' And he concludes that however startling Hobbian novelties may be, they are nevertheless 'the moves of a master player who knew and kept to the mediæval rules.' And how great a revolution this view constitutes in an interpretation of Hobbes's philosophy is known to those who have been brought up on earlier expositions.

Something of the same kind of revolution has taken place, also, in our ideas about the relation of Hobbes and Aristotle. Like Bacon, Hobbes regarded Aristotle as a dead hand in philosophy, paralysing thought and inhibiting further advance; and nobody was more fierce than Hobbes in his belief that, wherever else authority had place, mere authority had no place at all in philosophy. But here, again, we may easily be misled by Hobbes's truculence; the 'Vain Philosophy of Aristotle' taught him more than he ever admitted. The doctrines of the *Metaphysics*, the *Ethics* and the *Politics*, it is true, influenced him little; but I think a closer study would show that he took more than he ever cared to acknowledge from the *Rhetoric*. Of all the writings of Aristotle, the *Rhetoric* was the one which Hobbes had studied most profoundly, and many of its doctrines entered deeply into his philosophy.

The recent studies of Hobbes's writings, then, return a more discriminating answer than hitherto to the question, What is new in Hobbes? Our knowledge is greater, and our prejudice is less than that which earlier writers enjoyed and suffered from. We are no longer pledged to find in these writings nothing but the gospel of modern materialism; and we know that even if that is still to be found, the philosophy of Hobbes is in the nature of a palimpsest. And, if there is danger ahead, it lies in the exaggeration of the, at least, semi-mediæval portrait with which this recent work presents us. For there can be no doubt that Hobbes's writings do represent a profound revolution in European thought, there can be no doubt that he was one of the most original of philosophers; and our task now is to determine the relevance of the new setting into which his writings have been put.

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When we turn to consider, not merely what we have learnt during the last ten years from these general treatments of Hobbes's philosophy, but whether these years have produced any significant addition to our detailed knowledge of his writings, we have to record Professor Brandt's *Thomas Hobbes' Mechanical Conception of Nature*, perhaps the most important study of these writings which has yet appeared. Originally published in Danish in 1921, and translated into English in 1928, this volume is one of those detailed examinations of philosophical texts which are more valuable than all the handbooks and general expositions of Hobbes's philosophy that have ever been written. The programme of the work is set in its preface: ' This book proposes to show how the mechanical view of nature shaped itself to Thomas Hobbes. Strange as it may appear, this problem has never been treated in detail. As soon as we leave the province of more general considerations and seek detailed information, we are as a rule left in the lurch by the Hobbes literature which, as it is, is not very abundant. It is not only that a really critical account of Hobbes's natural philosophical main work *De Corpore* is still lacking, though some few points have been elucidated, but Hobbes's natural philosophical process of development is as yet nebulous. Enquirers have chiefly studied the main work which Hobbes published in his sixty-seventh year, but have almost entirely ignored the long process of development that must have preceded it.' We have here, then, an elaborate and detailed study of the development of a man's ideas. The questions asked are, ' What did Hobbes actually mean when he said that everything must be explained mechanically? Why did he think so? And, How did he arrive at this mechanical point of view?' And in answering them many subsidiary points have to be decided. The chronology of Hobbes's early writings presents difficulties; and in a writer apparently so independent as Hobbes, his relation to, and obligation to, Descartes, Mersenne and Galileo is not easy to determine. Having settled these and other preliminary questions, Professor Brandt goes on to distinguish two periods in the development of Hobbes's natural philosophy ; the earlier, 1630 to 1641, in which doctrines (many of them recognizably Aristotelian) were propounded which were later to be rejected; and the later, 1641 to 1655, in which the view of the *De Corpore* (published in 1655) was matured. And the work

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concludes with an elaborate examination of the *De Corpore* itself.

It will be thought, perhaps, that an enquiry of this sort into the minutiæ of a dead philosophy is a profitless undertaking, or that it must compare unfavourably with more imaginative and less meticulous experiments in philosophical interpretation. Indeed, this may be expected to be the view of those intent upon the construction of a philosophy for themselves. But even they, if such were their view, would be wrong. If we are to read philosophy at all, we must read it with care and take the pains necessary for its understanding ; and the exceptional value of Professor Brandt's work lies in the thoroughness with which it covers his subject. It may be remarked also that his formulation of the questions to be answered, and his whole conception of the business in hand, give a very fair guarantee of the usefulness of his conclusions. For what we must know about a philosopher, if we are to understand his philosophy, is not merely *what* he thought, but also *why* he thought it. Indeed, in philosophy, this *what* and this *why* are inseparable; taken apart each loses its meaning. In politics, in religion, in practical life it is not always necessary to enquire into a man's reasons for thinking as he does ; but in philosophy these reasons are what give meaning to his conclusions ; and it is, perhaps, on account of this that mankind in general must be so little interested in philosophy, and so little understand it, as always to wish to assimilate it to what can more easily be appreciated by neglecting this characteristic. Agreement between two men, in some fields, may be significant even if it be merely agreement about what is to be done, agreement about a conclusion ; but in philosophy such agreement has no significance whatever ; no two philosophers can be said to agree unless their conclusions and their reasons for those conclusions alike coincide. And it is particularly necessary in the case of Hobbes to enquire into the reasons he gives for his views, because he has, in the past, suffered greatly at the hands of expositors who are content to press the similarity of some of his views with those (for example) of Bodin, or even Machiavelli, and neglect altogether the dissimilarity of reason which lies behind it. And even the much advertised similarity between Hobbes and Spinoza almost disappears when their doctrines are closely examined. Hobbes's originality consists almost wholly in the reasons he gives for his conclusions, and a true

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interpretation of his work is impossible unless these are considered with the greatest care.

Now, if these are the most outstanding results of the study to which, during the last ten years, the writings of Hobbes have been subjected, there are also some important acquisitions of a more detailed character. Ten years ago it was possible for Vaughan[1] to write as if Hobbes was something other than the most profoundly philosophical individualist in the history of political theory, to write as if he were to be classed among those whose views must be rejected by the liberal tradition, as if his philosophy were a reaction against the individualism of his time, to assert even that Hobbes is 'the deadliest enemy of individualism.' And this false interpretation is no longer possible: Hobbes, we can now see, had more of the ground of liberalism in him than even Locke. I think that the true nature of Hobbes's individualism has yet to find its expositor, we have still to wait for the interpreter who will show us that this individualism is based, not upon any foundation in moral opinion at all, but upon a theory of knowledge, upon a thorough-going nominalism and an almost as extreme solipsism. But the progress which has been made in this direction is already enough to indicate the extent of the error involved in these earlier views. And again, it was long customary to expound Hobbes's political philosophy as a philosophy of Fear; this for example is what it is represented to be by Vaughan. But a closer study of the writings has shown that Pride, and not Fear, is the master-conception of this political philosophy. But here, also, we have still to ascertain the full implication of this revised view. And lastly, although it is (unfortunately) still possible for writers to simulate the grotesque moral indignation to which both Vaughan and Figgis are apt to abandon themselves, we may fairly be said, during the past ten years, to have outgrown this kind of absurdity. Hobbes, it has been said, 'put truth under the heel of policy' and 'dragged religion under the Juggernaut car of reason of state'; and his theory has been described as 'one of unadulterated despotism or nothing.' But these misconceptions, arising from a failure to make elementary distinctions and from a fatal

[1]In *Studies in the History of Political Philosophy* (1925), Vol. I.

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ignorance with regard to the foundations upon which Hobbes's views are based, are fast becoming errors of the past. And we may now find even an otherwise not profoundly instructed writer willing to distinguish between absolutism and sovereignty, and thus remove from the exposition of Hobbes's political philosophy a longstanding misrepresentation paralleled only in its foolishness by the confusion of absolutism and the Absolute which used to disfigure the interpretations of Hegel.

The misunderstandings of the philosophy of Hobbes which the work of the last ten years has removed are, in the main, misunderstandings due to ignorance. And if we turn to inquire, What remains to be done? the answer must be that we have yet to remove many misunderstandings due to lack of insight. 'Research' will never take the place of thought; and what Hobbes's philosophy stands in need of is a more profound consideration.

The student of Hobbes's philosophy is faced with an initial difficulty which requires to be met, not merely with patience, but with faith—I mean the difficulty of believing that Hobbes really means what he appears to say. For what he says is so unlike what is commonly said, and appears at first sight to be so extravagant, that the reader is inclined to exclaim, what Hobbes himself is said to have exclaimed on being presented with the proof of the forty-seventh theorem in Euclid's *Elements*—'By God, this is impossible.' And some readers, so impressed with the impossibility of what Hobbes says, conclude that he meant something other than what he appears to mean, and make of his philosophy something more commonplace than it in fact is. Hobbes, we have to remember, is, of English philosophers, the one possessed of the greatest measure of philosophical imagination; and so comparatively rare is this in English philosophical writing, that we may almost be forgiven for failing to appreciate it in Hobbes. English philosophical writers are not, generally speaking, given to the construction of systems; and this abstinence is both the strength and the weakness of English philosophy. But Hobbes did construct a system, a complete and comprehensive view of the universe; and he conceived this system with such imaginative power that, in spite of its relatively simple character, it stands comparison with even the grand and imposing creation of Hegel.

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And further, he had the capacity, the patience and the opportunity to elaborate the details of this system so thoroughly that, whatever its imperfections, it cannot be said to have been imperfectly imagined or imperfectly elaborated. But if the power of philosophical imagination, a power possessed by only the greatest philosophers, is one Hobbes's most remarkable qualities, it is also the source of some of the more obvious defects of his philosophical writing. For his imaginative propensities are not confined to the conception of a comprehensive theory, they penetrate also the form of his exposition and his diction. To think in metaphors and not to restrain one's fancy must always be defects in a philosopher ; and Hobbes, while complaining of these faults in others, suffered from them himself. In Hobbes's writing is exemplified both the virtue and the danger of philosophical imagination ; he is an imaginative thinker, but also an imaginative writer. And it is not only the imaginative grasp of Hobbes's philosophical thinking which make it remarkable in the history of English philosophy: it has another equally unexpected quality. Radicalism, extravagance, the intrepid following out of a theory conceived in the grand manner and the absence of any sign of alarm, dismay or compromise, are not qualities often to be found in English thinkers ; but they flourish in Hobbes almost unchecked. As a nation we are more easily alarmed at the creations of our intellectual than at those of our practical activity ; and we do not require to be persuaded that truth and moderation live in the same street, we believe it on instinct. But Hobbes appears never to have been even tempted to make his conclusions more moderate than he found them ; and compromise and fear had no place in his intellectual character. And on account of this, also, Hobbes's writings are sometimes as difficult to credit as they are to believe. But it is as foolish to doubt that a writer means what he writes as it is insulting to doubt that a companion means what he says. And if we are to interpret Hobbes correctly, we must avoid this mistake. There are, of course, writers who do not know what they mean, but Hobbes certainly is not among these.

Now, if our insight into the meaning of Hobbes's philosophy is hindered by this initial difficulty of crediting its doctrines, it is apt to be restricted by a failure to appreciate the fact that this system is a philosophy. We are content to take its doctrines

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separately and are reluctant to follow Hobbes back to the foundation of his thought: we find imbedded in its superstructure ideas with which we think ourselves familiar and, ignorant of what lies underneath, we do not question that familiarity. And bringing with us a somewhat different notion of what philosophy is from that which Hobbes himself entertained, we fail to adjust our expectations to what is offered us and consequently end by misinterpreting it. Let us consider briefly three examples of the restricted insight into Hobbes's philosophy which arises from this failure to appreciate its philosophical character.

It is often said that in Hobbes's view human nature is essentially selfish ; and this doctrine of the selfishness of man is represented as the foundation upon which he builds his social and political philosophy, as the premise of his reasoning. And it is suggested also that it is in his premises, and not in his reasoning, that his error lies. But when we turn to what Hobbes actually wrote, and treat it as a systematic whole, we find that the essential selfishness of man is not, in Hobbes, a premise, but (if the doctrine is to be found anywhere) is a conclusion, the result of a long and complicated argument. His premise is a doctrine of solipsism, a belief in the essential isolation of men from one another, and expounded as a theory of knowledge. This isolation, it is true, is modified by ' the most noble and profitable invention of all other,' speech ; but it remains a merely artificial modification. And when this genuine premise of Hobbes's argument is appreciated, the attribution to him of the doctrine of the essential selfishness of man is seen at once to be mistaken. Others have held an egoistic view of human nature, and have based that view upon their observation of human behaviour ; but no such argument is to be found in Hobbes. His doctrine is that each man is unavoidably shut up within the world of his own sensations ; and there is no more meaning in speaking of him as ' selfish ' than there is in speaking of anything else that is monadically conceived as selfish—the universe as a whole, or an electron. Here also the reason for belief conditions the character of what is believed.

Again, Hobbes's doctrine of authority has suffered from its being isolated from the system of his thought. But here also Hobbes's argument begins not from a view of the *moral* character

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of man as so many theories of authority begin, or from insight into contemporary political needs, but from a view of the nature of man merely as an experiencing being. Hobbes's theory of law and government has, indeed, no ethical foundation, in the ordinary sense ; but it is conceived throughout in purely naturalistic terms, and begins in the theory of language. The creation of language and the establishment of the state are, for Hobbes, inventions of the same character and serve the same end. The necessity of an absolute sovereign in the community arises not from any such subsidiary observation as the misery of mankind without it, but is a necessity exactly paralleled by the necessity of fixing the meanings of names if language is to serve any useful purpose at all. Hobbes's belief in the necessity of a single decisive authority does not arise from his political fears, and he does not think of this authority as a practical expedient; it is conceived and presented by Hobbes as a logical necessity. Pascal said, ' Lorsqu'on ne sait pas la vérité d'úne chose, il est bon qu'il y ait une erreur commune qui fixe l'esprit des hommes ' ; Hobbes asserts that there is never anything but a common error, that truth itself is a common error, and that since what is important is that it should be genuinely common, it must be fixed by authority. A language which is understood by only a single person and a way of behaviour which is pursued by one man independently of all other men are, for Hobbes, examples of the same kind of anarchy. And as authority alone can put an end to anarchy in the one case, authority alone can put an end to it in the other. For what is remarkable in Hobbes's doctrine of authority, and what on any other interpretation appears as a mere contradiction, is that it finds no place whatever for authority except in the control of men's actions. Both the intellect and the conscience are excluded from its control, and they are excluded because when a man is by himself, when he is speaking to himself, it is not necessary that the language he uses should be understood by others. Nobody was a more determined opponent that Hobbes of anything like authority in philosophy, in belief, in opinion ; and his stand against the authority of Aristotle in philosophy is not merely not inconsistent with his view of the necessity of an absolute authority in matters of social conduct, but, when we consider upon what that view is based, is seen to be involved in it.

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And thirdly, Hobbes's so-called Erastianism is different from the Erastianism of Erastus and different from the Erastianism of any other writer whatever, because it is based upon different reasons. His view of the place of religion and a Church in a community is a philosophical view ; that of Erastus and of those who follow him is not more than an opinion about what is most convenient. Hobbes's view is based upon, not moral principles, but the principles of his theory of knowledge, upon his doctrines of nominalism and solipsism ; theirs is based upon expediency and an observation of the world. And consequently they have, at bottom, little or nothing in common. Hobbes, it has been said, 'was an Erastian without limitations,' and it is this absence of limitations which makes it misleading to speak of him as an Erastian at all.

It appears, then, that Hobbes has come again ; surprisingly, there seems even to be a prejudice in his favour at the present time. But our business must be to see that in this appearance he is neither applauded nor abused for views he never held. In point of knowledge we are in a better position with regard to Hobbes than our predecessors ; our business is to improve our insight. And I think our insight will become deeper when we are more prepared to credit what he says, when we are more firmly persuaded of the error of taking his doctrines separately, and when we have grasped more surely that what we are offered by Hobbes is a philosophical system and not a mere collection of opinions. And someday, perhaps, Hobbes's writings will suffer the fate which has already overtaken the works of some of the more notable philosophers—they will be understood by others better than by the man who composed them.

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THE CRITICAL WRITINGS OF GEORGE SANTAYANA:

AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THE publication of Santayana's novel (reviewed separately in this number of *Scrutiny*) provides an excuse for taking stock of his contribution to literature generally (' literature ' as distinct from ' philosophy '). Though, to judge by the editions some of his books have passed through, he has at any rate been steadily read, he has not in this country received acclamations or even acknowledgments from later critics. The only reference I can recall is a mere reference by Mr. Eliot to *Three Philosophical Poets* in the introduction to his Dante handbook (and the work is of course recommended in *How to Teach Reading*). Mr. Desmond McCarthy indeed, following up a tip in *English Prose Style*, declared some years ago in one of our weeklies that he found Santayana's style difficult to read at any length or words to that effect, and perhaps this indicates that Santayana has never had a Bloomsbury vogue. However that may be, undergraduates and other persons interested in literature rarely seem to have come across his writings. The object of this note is to point to those parts of his work which are relevant to the study of literature and to suggest the uses which may be made of them.

It seems essential to emphasize that Santayana is not an Englishman nor in any respect, by temperament, birth, education or religion, shares the English tradition. He is a Latin of the Mediterranean civilization, he was educated in French and German schools and universities, and was born, so he declares in the prologue to his novel, with ' an immense advantage in belonging to the Catholic tradition.' Accordingly he makes a radically different approach from the native critic to Anglo-Saxon literature, culture, and society ; the English critic is inevitably obliged to work from inside the circle containing these subjects, and yet so accustomed are we to this limitation that we are not likely to notice it until

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the shock of the contrast presented by such criticism as Santayana's makes it apparent. The prologue to *Soliloquies in England* tells us that though he inherited a family admiration for English literature and the English nation, he did not visit England until he was twenty-three. His observations of the United States (see footnote to p. 5 of *Character and Opinion in the United States*) were made over the period 1872-1912, and it is some time during that period, presumably, that he was a professor of philosophy at Harvard. From 1914 to 1919 he lived in England, chiefly at Oxford. This is all we are told in his works of his biography, and is all the information we need.

The first publication of his that I wish to refer to is probably his best-known piece of criticism, *Three Philosophical Poets* (Vol. I of Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature, 1910, Harvard University Press). 'What I can offer the benevolent reader,' he writes characteristically in the Preface, ' is no learned investigation. It is only a piece of literary criticism, together with a first broad lesson in the history of philosophy—and, perhaps, in philosophy itself.' This study of Lucretius, Dante and Goethe is a good example—though not the best—of Santayana's peculiar contribution to criticism. The fact that in approaching poetry he is, and knows it essential to be, first of all a *literary* critic is shown by the opening of the Introduction:

> ' The sole advantage in possessing great works of literature lies in what they can help us to become . . . Foreign classics have to be retranslated and reinterpreted for each generation, to render their old naturalness in a natural way, and keep their perennial humanity living and capable of assimilation. Even native classics have to be reapprehended by every reader. It is this continual digestion of the substance supplied by the past that alone renders the insights of the past still potent in the present and for the future. Living criticism, genuine appreciation, is the interest we draw from year to year on the unrecoverable capital of human genius.'

The reader may well be surprised to hear the voice of what sounds like a contemporary critic speaking thus clearly in 1910. [He will be even more surprised on reading *Poetry and Religion* (1900) at the discussions of the relation between poetry, religion

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and science and of such related topics as the function of myths and the nature of belief ; and in his pre-War writings generally there is much incidental discussion of what we have been taught are contemporary critical problems—that differs from such contemporary discussions only in the absence of unction, excitement and any pretentions to originality.] His philosophical equipment is not therefore a matter merely of bringing a knowledge of philosophy and a technical vocabulary and method to bear upon a text—of abstracting ideas or ' a philosophy ' from an organization of words in order to discuss them apart from the whole context (a game which is often played by persons with a philosophical equipment and which remains only a game—like bringing a knowledge of Freud to bear on a poem—except in as much as it is a source of possible confusion to the young student). Santayana is a philosophical critic only in the sense that he brings a philosopher's mind—that is, a mind which has been subjected to a technical discipline—in alliance with a remarkably fine sensibility to the analysis of works of art as such. And he is an important critic because literary criticism for him is not in the least a game with poetry as counters but supremely a matter of evaluation, of relating poetry to culture, tradition and human experience.

That the sensibility is a remarkable one no reader of his earliest work of literary criticism, *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion* (Scribners, 1900) can doubt. Here, in the essay on ' The Poetry of Barbarism ' (Browning and Whitman), we have the best possible instance of the inter-relation this critic's work exhibits between criticism of the ' philosophy ' and criticism of the ' poetry.' Here in the essay on Browning he can be observed beginning at the right end—with an examination of texture, of the way in which words are used and the kind of experience they proceed from. His criticism of the ' philosophy ' is not a discussion of the ' ideas ' but a criticism of the nature of the total experience that the poet's work offers. The following is an example of the fusion of philosopher with literary critic; of course it suffers in being taken out of its admirable and closely-argued context:

> 'His long poems have no structure—for that name cannot be given to the singular mechanical division of " The Ring and the Book." Even his short poems have no completeness, no

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limpidity. They are little torsos made broken so as to stimulate the reader to the restoration of the missing legs and arms. What is admirable in them is pregnancy of phrase, vividness of passion and sentiment, heaped-up scraps of observation, occasional flashes of light, occasional beauties of versification—all like

> " the quick sharp scratch
> And blue spurt of the lighted match."

. . . He affects with the reader a confidential and vulgar manner, so as to be more sincere and to feel more at home. Even in the poems where the effort at impersonality is most successful, the dramatic disguise is usually thrown off in a preface, epilogue or parenthesis. The author likes to remind us of himself by some confidential wink or genial poke in the ribs, by some little interlarded sneer. We get in these tricks of manner a taste of that essential vulgarity, that indifference to purity and distinction, which is latent but pervasive in all the products of this mind. The same disdain of perfection which appears in his ethics appears here in his verse, and impairs its beauty by allowing it to remain too often obscure, affected and grotesque. Such a correspondence is natural . . . Discipline is indispensable to art. Work from which these qualities are absent must be barbaric ; it can have no ideal form and must appeal to us only through the sensuousness and profusion of its materials . . . Clarification of ideas and disentanglement of values are as essential to æsthetic activity as to intelligence . . . The limits of Browning's art, like the limits of Whitman's, can therefore be understood by considering his mental habit.'

It must evidently be a rarely talented mind that can be as fine, sure and original a critic in a foreign language. In general a foreigner can expect at best to be able to endorse with his personal response the judgment of the native critics, but this writer has in addition been able to break fresh ground of his own. In 1900, I think it may be said, there was no radically critical attitude to Browning's poetry in circulation. A re-orientation to Browning, unlike a re-orientation to Tennyson, does not follow as a matter of course once ' Victorian ' becomes a term of censure. That the attitude to Browning expressed in

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Poetry and Religion has become generally current—even permissible in the academic world—must be largely due to radiations from this essay, for the justice of the case presented there cannot but be admitted when once made.

The interesting essay in the same volume on 'The Absence of Religion in Shakespeare'—which when read throws light on some odd remarks in Mr. Eliot's *Dante* about Dante being a superior kind of poet to Shakespeare—brings us back to *Three Philosophical Poets*. One of Santayana's unusual qualifications, I suggested earlier, is that he lacks those unconscious assumptions of the English-born critic which have been implanted by the latter's cultural environment. That Shakespeare, and Dickens too, are notable for the *absence* they betray of a religion is not a point which is ever likely to have suggested itself to an Anglo-Saxon. Yet it is apparent enough to the Catholic mind, like the fact that 'Normal religious experience is hardly described in [James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*]. Religious experience, for the great mass of mankind, consists in simple faith in the truth and benefit of their religious traditions.' The contrast between the section on Dante in *Three Philosophical Poets* and the monograph on Dante Mr. Eliot published a few years ago is interesting if only that it illustrates the superior sophistication and detachment of the disillusioned Catholic. It is perhaps not impertinent to say that the Anglo-Catholic attitude to Dante is there felt to be reverential to the point of prostration and to the exclusion of a critical attitude. The cool approach of Santayana, equally serious and equally sensitive to Dante's genius but free also to register critical dissatisfaction, comes out in refreshing contrast and is justified by the use he makes of his criticisms for comparative study.

Another enlightening example of the essentially Latin quality of Santayana's criticism is provided by the essay on Dickens in *Soliloquies in England* (Constable, 1922); it offers striking contrast in every respect to the representative native studies of Dickens, particularly the popular work on Dickens by (if I may put it so) an Anglo-Saxon Catholic, Mr. G. K. Chesterton. Chesterton, while desiring to be immeasurably laudatory, does not succeed in isolating or pointing to the peculiar virtues of Dickens's writings; all his book does is to project on to a fictitious Dickens the highly-coloured and boisterous literary personality of G.K.C. It is a Teutonic and

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insular piece of work, and in the end does neither Dickens nor his readers any good. Santayana's essay is perfectly impersonal (one's consciousness of an un-English force at work behind it does not conflict with this statement); while making all the radical criticisms of Dickens he also distinguishes his unique merits and values them as highly as possible. It is the only intelligent critique of Dickens I have ever met with. This is representative of the line he takes.

'If Christendom should lose everything that is now in the melting-pot, human life would still remain amiable and quite adequately human. I draw this comforting assurance from the pages of Dickens. Who could not be happy in his world? Yet there is nothing essential to it which the most destructive revolution would be able to destroy . . . Indeed, there is much in Dickens which communism, if it came, would only emphasize and render universal . . .

It is remarkable, in spite of his ardent simplicity and openness of heart, how insensible Dickens was to the greater themes of the human imagination—religion, science, politics and art. He was a waif himself, and utterly disinherited. For example, the terrible heritage of contentious religions which fills the world seems not to exist for him. In this matter he was like a sensitive child, with a most religious disposition, but no religious ideas. Perhaps, properly speaking, he had no *ideas* on any subject; what he had was a vast sympathetic participation in the daily life of mankind; and what he saw of ancient institutions made him hate them, as needless sources of oppression, misery, selfishness, and rancour. His one political passion was philanthropy, genuine but felt only on its negative reforming side; of positive utopias or enthusiasms we hear nothing. The political background of Christendom is only, so to speak, an old faded backdrop for his stage; a castle, a frigate, a gallows, and a large female angel with white wings standing above an orphan by an open grave—a decoration which has to serve for all the melodramas in his theatre, intellectually so provincial and poor . . . In reviving Christmas, Dickens transformed it from the celebration of a metaphysical mystery into a feast of overflowing simple kindness and good cheer; the church bells were

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still there—in the orchestra; and the angels of Bethlehem were still there—painted on the back-curtain . . .

I say he was disinherited, but he inherited the most terrible negation. Religion lay on him like the weight of the atmosphere, sixteen pounds to the square inch, yet never noticed nor mentioned. He lived and wrote in the shadow of the most awful prohibitions. Hearts petrified by legality and falsified by worldliness offered, indeed, a good subject for a novelist, and Dickens availed himself of it to the extent of always contrasting natural goodness and happiness with whatever is morose ; but his morose people were wicked, not virtuous in their own way ; so that the protest of his temperament against his environment never took a radical form nor went back to first principles. He needed to feel, in his writing, that he was carrying the sympathies of every man with him . . .

What, then, is there left, if Dickens has all these limitations? In our romantic disgust we might be tempted to say, Nothing. But in fact almost everything is left, almost everything that counts in the daily life of mankind, or that by its presence or absence can determine whether life shall be worth living or not ; because a simple good life is worth living, and an elaborate bad life is not . . .

It is usual to compare Dickens with Thackeray, which is like comparing the grape with the gooseberry ; there are obvious points of resemblance, and the gooseberry has some superior qualities of its own ; but you can't make red wine of it . . . '

Another facet of this quality is the Latin acuteness for diagnosing Romanticism and putting it in its place. In general Romanticism either goes to the head of the Anglo-Saxon critic or else, as in the notable instance of the New England Humanists, is rejected with exaggerated shudders for a sterile and empty negation of romanticism. Santayana can both put the romantic writer in his place and duly value the uses of the romantic vitality, as for instance in his account (*Three Philosophical Poets*) of Faust's love for Helen:

' This passion in a romantic age is not so paradoxical as it may sound. Winckelmann and the philologians were restoring something ancient. It was the romantic passion for all

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experience—for the faded experience of the ancients also—that made, for them, the poetry and the charm of antiquity. How dignified everything was in those heroic days! How noble, serene and abstracted! How pure the blind eyes of statues, how chaste the white folds of the marble drapery! Greece was a remote, fascinating vision, the most romantic thing in the history of mankind. The sad, delicious emotion one felt before a ruined temple was as sentimental as anything one could feel before a ruined castle, but more elegant and more choice. It was sentimentality in marble. The heroes of the *Iliad* were idealized in the same way as the savages of Rousseau were idealized, or as the robbers of Schiller. The romantic classicism of the Napoleonic era lies between the polite classicism of the French seventeenth century and the archæological classicism of our present Grecians . . . For Goethe, however, as for Byron, Greece was less a past civilization, to be studied scientifically, than a living idea, a summons to new forms of art and of sentiment. Goethe was never so romantic as when he was classical. His distichs are like theatrical gestures ; he feels the sweep of his toga as he rounds them off.'

Winds of Doctrine (Dent, 1913) contains the first intelligent analysis of Shelley ;[1] perhaps I should add that Santayana thinks highly of Shelley's genius, though raising all the serious criticisms of Shelley that must be made. This volume contains also three philosophical critiques which may be useful to the student of literature for two reasons—their subject-matter borders on literary criticism and sometimes overlaps it, and they reveal the workings of Santayana's critical intelligence. These essays are ' The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy,' ' The Philosophy of M. Henri Bergson ' and ' The Philosophy of Mr. Bertrand Russell.' What these show is the impossibility for Santayana of separating for purposes of logical analysis his intelligence from his literary critic's sensibility: his criticism of the philosophic systems or ethical propositions of Bergson and Russell are controlled by a criticism proceeding from taste. The characteristic *procédé* may be seen in this extract from the second section of his essay on Russell, ' The Study of Essence ' :

[1] ' Shelley: or The Poetic Value of Revolutionary Principles.'

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' Mathematics seems to have a value for Mr. Russell akin to that of religion. It affords a sanctuary to which to flee from the world, a heaven suffused with a serene radiance and full of a peculiar sweetness and consolation. " Real life," he writes, " is to most men a long second-best, a perpetual compromise between the ideal and the possible ; but the world of pure reason knows no compromise, no practical limitations, no barrier to the creative activity embodying in splendid edifices the passionate aspiration after the perfect from which all great work springs. Remote from human passions, remote even from the pitiful laws of nature, the generations have gradually created an ordered cosmos where pure thought can dwell as in its natural home, and where one, at least, of our nobler impulses can escape from the dreary exile of the actual world." This study is one of " those elements in human life which merit a place in heaven." " The true spirit of delight, the exaltation, the sense of being more than man, which is the touchstone of the highest excellence, is to be found in mathematics as surely as in poetry."

This enthusiastic language might have, I should think, an opposite effect upon some readers to that which Mr. Russell desires. It might make them suspect that the claim to know an absolute ideal necessity, so satisfying to one of our passionate impulses, might be prompted by the same conceit, and subject to the same illusion, as the claim to know absolute truth in religion. Beauty, when attributed to necessary relations between logical entities, casts a net of subjectivity over them ; and at this net the omnivorous empiricist might be tempted to haul, until he fancied he had landed the whole draught of miraculous fishes. The fish, however, would have slipped through the meshes ; and it would be only his own vital emotion, projected for a moment into the mathematical world, that he would be able to draw back and hug to his bosom.'

The original and main line of argument is logical, as the context makes plain, but there is also by implication (in the note on ' this enthusiastic language ' and the dry reference to the nature of the emotions displayed in Russell's substitution of the mathematical sciences for religion) a parallel criticism of the kind it is the business of literary criticism to make. A pointer is provided

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for the beginner who feels, but wants help in formulating, what is wrong with Russell's characteristic and once popular essay 'A Free Man's Worship,' the attitudes of which were in great esteem in highbrow circles at the time (just before the War) and which have left a progeny of rhetorical attitudes of the frail-human-pride-confronting-the-universe-undismayed breed to deck the path of the aspiring adolescent with models of false style and cheap emotionalism.

Character and Opinion in the United States (Constable, 1920) is similarly relevant, in its criticisms of the influence of philosophic systems upon the soil from which literature grows, but additionally in its analysis of pre-War American culture and of the American academic environment. Santayana's ability to be at home in alien or dead cultures and at the same time to analyze them from the vantage ground of an unmoved centrality, is of peculiar profit to literary criticism. Here for instance are three brief passages from this book to illustrate the capacity for seizing upon the essentials of an ethos, the lively penetration that exposes them to us in characteristic moments, and the highly civilized standards by which they are implicitly evaluated for the reader:

> 'The President of Harvard College, seeing me once by chance soon after the beginning of a term, inquired how my classes were getting on; and when I replied that I thought they were getting on well, that my men seemed to be keen and intelligent, he stopped me as if I were about to waste his time. "I meant," he said, "*what is the number* of students in your classes." . . . The democratic conscience recoils before anything that savours of privilege; and lest it should concede an unmerited privilege to any pursuit or person, it reduces all things as far as possible to the common denominator of quantity. Numbers cannot lie: but if it came to comparing the ideal beauties of philosophy with those of Anglo-Saxon, who should decide? All studies are good—why else have universities?—but those must be most encouraged which attract the greatest number of students. Hence the President's question. Democratic faith, in its diffidence about quality, throws the reins of education upon the pupil's neck, as Don Quixote threw the reins on the neck of Rocinante, and bids his divine instinct choose its own way.'

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'No single abstract opinion was particularly tabooed at Harvard; granted industry, sobriety, and some semblance of theism, no professor was expected to agree with any other. I believe the authorities would have been well pleased, for the sake of completeness, to have added a Buddhist, a Moslem, and a Catholic scholastic to the philosophical faculty, if only suitable sages could have been found, house-trained, as it were, and able to keep pace with the academic machine and to attract a sufficient number of pupils. But this official freedom was not true freedom, there was no happiness in it. A slight smell of brimstone lingered in the air. You might think what you liked, but you must consecrate your belief or unbelief to the common task of encouraging everybody and helping everything on. You might almost be an atheist, if you were troubled enough about it. The atmosphere was not that of intelligence nor of science, it was that of duty.'

'The professor of philosophy had to swim against rather a powerful current. Sometimes he succumbed to the reality; and if, for instance, he happened to mention Darwin, and felt a blank before him, he would add in a parenthesis, "Darwin, Charles, author of the *Origin of Species*, 1859; epoch-making work."'

And yet what Santayana is in sum registering an objection against is the academic outlook, not merely the particular form that took at Harvard. This seems to me one of his striking and valuable qualities. Perhaps I had better come to the point without further delay and say to what uses I think Santayana's critical writings may be put with the greatest profit. This is, as I have occasionally suggested, as a live force to assist in the study of literature at the university stage. Santayana, through his history and personal endowments, provides the best possible corrective to the unconscious assumptions and prejudices that the English public-school product commonly brings to his reading—the insular Nordic Protestant limitations that it is the business of education to remove, or at least to make aware of themselves. In so far as he is a philosopher he comes not to add to vocabularies but to clear away

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confusion.[1] Next there is the fine example presented by the clear and rational thinking of a disciplined mind, which of itself suggests a standard whose absence will be felt in other less desirable kinds of critical writings. It is unlikely, for instance, that after studying these essays of Santayana's a student will, even if pressed to do so by authority, take seriously or even waste time on the barren and confused ideaishness of Professor Lascelles Abercrombie's yellow volumes. And similarly the quality of the sensibility expressed in his criticism is a touchstone. The essence of Santayana's criticism is something that for want of a more exact word one can only call wisdom: it is felt in his work pervasively as a mature outlook reinforced by an ancient civilized tradition,[2] wittily expressing itself in a shrewd and sophisticated common sense, based on wide and sensitive experience and therefore never failing to keep its generalizing in close touch with the particular, excelling in centrality of judgment. This is paralleled in his style by the suavity of tone, the delicate command of idiom and intonation, the fertility in illuminating (not decorative) metaphor and imagery, the positive presence of a quality which can only be defined as the opposite of naïve and which enables him to be serious without ever being solemn and to combine liveliness with a radical seriousness. His use of the epigram is characteristic. It is the opposite of what has come to be known, rather unjustly, as the Oxford epigram, which calls attention to itself ; Santayana's are thrown out by the way,

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[1] *e.g.* ' This side of M. Bergson's philosophy illustrates the worst and most familiar vices of metaphysics. It marvels at some appearance, not to investigate it, but to give it an unctuous name. Then it turns this name into a power, that by its operation creates the appearance. This is simply verbal mythology or the hypostasis of words, and there would be some excuse for a rude person who should call it rubbish.' (*Winds of Doctrine*, p. 94). The relevance of such an attitude to the pursuit of literary criticism is obvious.

[2] ' The life of reason is a heritage and exists only through tradition. Half of it is an art, an adjustment to an alien reality, which only a long experience can teach: and even the other half, the inward inspiration and ideal of reason, must be also a common inheritance in the race, if people are to work together or so much as to understand one another. (*Winds of Doctrine,* p. 156).

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they do not stand out of their context for the reader because the writer does not pause to savour them, they represent merely a congenial technique for crystallizing an approach or summing up an argument—*e.g.*, ' Ethical absolutism, being a mental grimace of passion, defeats what it says by what it is.' ' To covet truth is a very distinguished passion. Every philosopher says he is pursuing the truth, but this is seldom the case.' ' To understand oneself is the classic form of consolation ; to elude oneself is the romantic.'

The basis of his judgment is simply the finest possible taste. A fine taste among the educated class nowadays seems to signify merely the possession of a palate for expensive cooking and alcohol, or if anything more, then of an æsthetic taste of a corresponding nature. Santayana's æsthetic taste is inseparable from his moral taste, as may be seen in the extract quoted above from ' The Poetry of Barbarism ' ; nevertheless it is as different as possible from the pusillanimous literary criticism of an Irving Babbitt which censors in the interests of a conventional morality. His distaste (the appropriate word) for Hegelianism is another example of what I mean ; he refers to it incidentally in the Shelley essay—as ' simply contempt for all ideals, and a hearty adoration of things as they are,' ' appealing mightily to the powers that be, in church and state . . . the philosophy that flattered them,' and at more length in his study of Josiah Royce in *Character and Opinion*—' Hegel and his followers seem to be fond of imagining that they are moving in a tragedy . . . That is what romantic philosophy would condemn us to ; we must all strut and roar . . . this earnestness will be of the histrionic German sort, made to order and transferable at short notice from one object to another, since what truly matters is not that we should achieve our ostensible aim (which Hegel contemptuously called ideal) but that we should carry on perpetually, if possible with a *crescendo,* the strenuous experience of living in a gloriously bad world, and always working to reform it, with the comforting speculative assurance that we never can succeed.' It is evident that his attitude to Hegelianism proceeds from two inter-related kinds of judgment, that Hegelian idealism is contemptible (a) as a system for intellectual reasons (' not dialectic at all '), and (b) for the vulgarity inherent in its application to living, its intellectual defects being attributable to a moral cause—lack of disinterestedness in its conception, and the vulgarity arising

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from the histrionic outlook or moral inferiority of its admirers. This taste is pervasive in Santayana's work and this kind of criticism is characteristic of it ; it seems to me that such a taste is indispensable in literary criticism and that the kind of criticism it produces is the most important kind, and the kind most serviceable to the immature. For if the object of studying literature is not the education of taste, then such a study can have no more serious justification than the vestigial hankering after culture which Santayana diagnoses in the new Humanism—' Let us learn the dates and names of all famous persons.'

Perhaps the chief virtue of this writer for the purpose I have suggested lies in the set of his mind, which is not merely un- but positively anti-academic. ' I never liked the taste of academic straw,' he writes somewhere ; and the spirit of the following passage is characteristically healthful:

> ' The learned will dispute for ever on the exact basis and meaning of these confessions of Dante. The learned are perhaps not those best fitted to solve the problem. It is a matter for literary tact and sympathetic imagination. It must be left to the delicate intelligence of the reader, if he has it.'

The inevitable effect on the study of literature of an academic control, as things are, is to make it timorous (play for safety by keeping for choice two generations behind the present), middle-brow (make the academic world safe for mediocrity), conservative (re-orientation calls for effort ; it's easier to keep passing on the accepted currency) and gentlemanly (real criticism, as opposed to drawing-room literary chatter, is in bad taste, liable to make things awkward socially). But to have access to nothing but an academic criticism of literature is a disaster for the immature mind. All possibilities of development are blocked. To say this is of course to assume that development is in some degree at least dependent on external factors, and I am familiar with the *laissez-faire* theory that students are best left to ' sink or swim ' by their own unaided efforts. This theory seems merely a convenient cloak for laziness and irresponsibility. No doubt there are exceptional students who can cope with a library of texts unaided and can at the same time remain undamped by the academic fogs that hang around them; but to assume that the majority of those

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who come straight from school to study literature at a university do so in order to exhibit innate powers of swimming instead of to learn how to swim there, seems to me unwarranted by the facts. And as moreover most of them will proceed to earn their livings either by trying to teach others to swim or by practising swimming as a commercial or fine art, to give them no more assistance than the *laissez-faire* theorists would offer is evidently criminal. And in point of fact the kind of assistance represented by the academic criticism of literature, which is inescapably there anyway, is more by way of being a millstone hung round the neck of the struggling novice than the lifebuoy it professes to be The mere realization that the academic criticism of literature is not a work of revelation, so to speak, which it is blasphemous to doubt, often comes as a liberating experience.

What (to speak from personal experience and from other students' reports) is most needed at this stage is the stimulus represented by contact with disinterested, vitalizing, well-nourished minds. Now it is notorious (at least to students of literature) that such minds do not abound in the academic world of letters ; if they did there would be no academic criticism of literature. Therefore the integrity, the independence of conventional valuations and the reliance on ' the delicate intelligence ' which Santayana's essays and lectures exhibit, are peculiarly relevant to university studies, since many who cannot fend altogether for themselves can make use of others if given a little direction. Thus, to take a simple instance, while the academic criticism of Shelley will probably go on rehashing the congenial Clutton Brock for ever, just as with regard to Shakespeare it still says Thank God for Bradley, potentially intelligent students can work out with the assistance of *Winds of Doctrine* something like a just estimate of where Shelley stands in the English tradition.

The same qualities are the source of this writer's strength in a related field—that of cultural analysis, which, if an attempt at education is to be made through a literary course, is of radical importance. When such a subject is catered for only by the proposed study of ' Life and Thought,' and these are taken as two separate items or categories, the student is evidently again in need of non-academic assistance. If the study of ' Life and Thought ' is to have any real (as opposed to fondly imagined) bearing on

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the study of literature, it must centre in an analysis of the total cultural situation in the given age and should for educational purposes start with the present (whose problems and other heritages must be traced back into the nineteenth century). This seems obvious, and indeed was obvious to Professor Meiklejohn and his colleagues in the Experimental College. Meanwhile in one of our older universities at any rate, it is considered more or sufficiently important for approximately adult students of literature to make a simple survey of the social structure of mediæval England, presumably with a view to understanding references to the orders in Chaucer and so forth.

The literary student in search of an education has again to do everything for himself. There is little enough practical assistance available beyond the raw materials, so that here too Santayana's contribution must rank high, as much in the suggestions he throws out regarding relations and lines of study as in his actual analyses. Consider this passage from 'The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy'; both in itself and as suggesting an approach to the literature of other periods and cultures it would be invaluable for seminar purposes:

> '. . . Calvinism thus lost its basis in American life. Some emotional natures, indeed, reverted in their religious revivals or private searchings of heart to the sources of the tradition; for any of the radical points of view in philosophy may cease to be prevalent, but none can cease to be possible. Other natures, more sensitive to the moral and literary influences of the world, preferred to abandon parts of their philosophy, hoping thus to reduce the distance which should separate the remainder from real life.
>
> Meantime, if anybody arose with a special sensibility or a technical genius, he was in great straits; not being fed sufficiently by the world, he was driven in upon his own resources. The three American writers whose personal endowment was perhaps the finest—Poe, Hawthorne, and Emerson—had all a certain starved and abstract quality. They could not retail the genteel tradition; they were too keen, too perceptive, and too independent for that. But life offered them little digestible material, nor were they naturally voracious. They were fastidious,

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> and under the circumstances they were starved. Emerson, to be sure, fed on books. There was a great catholicity in his reading ; and he showed a fine tact in his comments, and in his way of appropriating what he read. But he read transcendentally, not historically, to learn what he himself felt, not what others might have felt before him. And to feed on books, for a philosopher or a poet, is still to starve. Books can help him to acquire form, or to avoid pitfalls ; they cannot supply him with substance, if he is to have any. Therefore the genius of Poe and Hawthorne, and even of Emerson, was employed on a sort of inner play, or digestion of vacancy. It was a refined labour, but it was in danger of being morbid, or tinkling, or self-indulgent. It was a play of intra-mental rhymes. Their mind was like an old music-box, full of tender echoes and quaint fancies. These fancies expressed their personal genius sincerely, as dreams may ; but they were arbitrary fancies in comparison with what a real observer would have said in the premises. Their manner, in a word, was subjective. In their own persons they escaped the mediocrity of the genteel tradition, but they supplied nothing to supplant it in other minds.'

Such an analysis of the social background as this passage implies is indispensable to any fruitful study of the literature of any period, and it has the additional importance of improving the student's equipment for understanding his own cultural environment—certainly one of the chief objects of education.

At present these critical essays, lectures and pieces cannot be got at except either in libraries or else by the outlay of a sum of money very considerable to the average student. Everyone would choose to own *Three Philosophical Poets*, *Winds of Doctrine* and *Character and Opinion in the United States*, if they could afford them, but having once studied the others I have mentioned in borrowed copies, literary students would probably wish to own for regular use only a selection of essays and passages from the latter. Clearly what is needed is a one-volume selection containing: from *Poetry and Religion* 'The Poetry of Barbarism,' 'The Absence of Religion in Shakespeare' and passages from the other constitutent essays ; from *Winds of Doctrine* 'The Genteel

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Tradition in American Philosophy,' the 'Shelley: or The Poetic Value of Revolutionary Principles,' and long extracts from the critiques of Bergson and Russell and from the essays on 'The Intellectual Temper of the Age' (the pre-War age) and on 'Modernism and Christianity'; from *Character and Opinion in the United States* the first three chapters and pieces of the others; from *Soliloquies in England* the essay on Dickens; and from *Three Philosophical Poets* passages passim; together with much or all of the pamphlet on Humanism (now out of print) called *The Genteel Tradition at Bay* (1931). The anthology, *Little Essays from the writings of George Santayana,* made in 1920 by Mr. Logan Pearsall Smith, while being the best prose bedside anthology I know of suffers from being made at that early date and also from the anthologist's choice, which, neglecting to do justice to the predominantly lively nature of this writer, draws heavily and one-sidedly on the abstract and generalizing passages in the writer's work, particularly from the philosophic volumes which have no relevance to literary criticism. As an epigraph for the title-page of the omnibus I have suggested there might be employed an aphorism of Santayana's own: 'Intelligence is the highest form of vitality.'

Q. D. LEAVIS.

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COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

EDITORIAL

A JOURNAL appearing only once in three months is peculiarly disabled from comment on the international crisis. We must content ourselves with calling attention to the following, and suggesting that they should be read and circulated by all who think it is of urgent importance to bring to bear on the Government the pressure of an informed public opinion:

Inquest on Peace, by 'Vigilantes' (Gollancz, 3/6),

Abyssinia, by 'Vigilantes' (The New Statesman and Nation, 6d.).

All teachers in every branch of education should see the

Report on the Conference of Academic Freedom (Heffer, 2/6)

which has just been published. This is the report of the conference held at Oxford in August this year with the support of an impressive list of persons of intellectual distinction and academic eminence. The aims of the conference are sufficiently indicated by these quotations from the Report:

> 'The proposal to hold the present Conference on academic freedom and subjects allied to it was made because it seemed an opportune time to review, in the light of events at home and abroad, the position of school and university teachers and of scientific research workers, not in their professional capacities, but as citizens upon whom devolved special responsibilities.'

That comes from the Introduction. The following is from Mr. G. D. H. Cole's address:

> 'This Conference . . . has a practical purpose. How and in what form are we to organise for the defence of academic freedom? In the first place the question has been and will be raised, "Is any defence necessary?" On the surface it would seem not. In this country we are still far too comfortable to be intolerant in an extreme degree. Freedom is always greatest in a stable state,

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in which the government can allow almost anything to be said because it is confident that almost nothing will be done. We have had as yet no attack on academic or professional freedom, other than those isolated attacks from reactionary bodies and individuals to which we had been accustomed and which can be more or less successfully resisted. But in view of the developments in other countries we cannot feel secure against a much more serious attack on our liberties in the near future.

It is better to be prepared in advance than to improvise an organisation when the danger is upon us in a really serious form, and although we have so far been immune from the gusts of intolerance that have swept over European countries, few of us can feel any real confidence that those conditions will be maintained.'

The constitution of the ACADEMIC FREEDOM COMMITTEE is as follows:

Professor Lascelles Abercrombie
J. D. Bernal.
Professor P. M. S. Blackett, F.R.S.
G. D. H. Cole
Professor F. M. Cornford
Miss Margaret Fry
Sir Philip Hartog, K.B.E.
Sir F. Gowland Hopkins, F.R.S., O.M.
Professor H. J. Laski
Professor H. Levy
Professor W. E. Le Gros Clark, F.R.S.
J. R. Marrack
J. Needham
Professor T. H. Pear
Bertrand Russell
Miss Jessie Thomas
C. H. Waddington

Representatives from:

The Association of Scientific Workers
The Association of Teachers in Technical Education
The Association of Tutors in Adult Education
The Association of University Teachers

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The National Association of Schoolmasters
The National Council for Civil Liberties.

Hon Secretary: Miss M. Gardiner,
110, Heath Street,
London, N.W. 3.

We should also like to remind readers that the NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES needs all possible support.

Address: 99a, Charing Cross Road,
London, W.C. 2.

THE SOUL OF MAN IN THE AGE OF LEISURE, by Storm Jameson (Stanley Nott, 6d.).

This short pamphlet starts by presenting a view of contemporary problems which would be acceptable to most readers, say, of the *New Statesman*—the abuse of machines, poverty in the midst of potential plenty, and other ills of an acquisitive society. When these maladies are cured, says the writer, we shall have a two-and-a-half-day week and abundant leisure. But the conditions of a capitalist economy unfit people to make the best use of their leisure, and here education must be applied. Suggestions follow for a training which will restore ' that vital continuity with our past which has been almost destroyed by the violence of industrial change.' For ' the . . . task of the Leisure State is nothing less than saving the mind and vital instincts of the individual man and woman from death by suffocation.'

Miss Jameson's essay says far more about ' education for leisure ' than several more pretentious books with similar titles. It is lucid and persuasive, and because it provides jumping-off points for any number of discussions it is admirably fitted for use in the top forms of schools. It appears in a series intended to propagate Major Douglas's theories, but neither directly nor by implication are they mentioned in its pages. It will make an admirable Christmas card, being certain to give pleasure to the converted and likely to move the not hopelessly unconverted.

D.T.

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A PUBLIC FOR POETRY

JANUS, by George Barker (Faber and Faber, 7/6).
POEMS, by Louis Macneice (Faber and Faber, 6/-).

The poetry-reading public that, we are often assured, exists to-day must have remarkably catholic tastes if it is able to bracket Messrs. Barker and Macneice together as signs of the poetic renaissance (included in the bracket are, I suppose, the usual names—Auden, Spender, Day Lewis and, perhaps, Bottrall). It is not a question here of the true poetry-enthusiast being able to stomach one kind of poetry, though such accusations are frequent ; it is a question of the great difference in the quality of these two authors. Yet, judging by what one reads, Mr. Barker has been received as favourably, at least, as Mr. Macneice—such is the desperate anxiety of reviewers to be in the swim. It should be pointed out here that *Janus* is written in prose, but as it is that type of prose usually known as ' poetic ' and as Mr. Barker is known mainly as a poet, I do not think that any injustice is done in including it in a review of poetry.

Janus consists of two fragments on Love and Death. We are informed by the ' blurb ' that ' Mr. Barker is coming to be accepted as the Keats ' of this time and that the stories are told ' in a form of prose which Mr. Barker has invented, unprecedented.' Now, I have gratitude and admiration for Messrs. Faber, but, without going into the question of who accepts Mr. Barker as the new Keats, I must say that this is a bit too thick. I should like to ask the writer in what possible way of thought, style, or relation to his age Keats resembles Mr. Barker either in poetry or prose. Has the writer ever read Keats' letters? And is Keats, even in the worst parts of *Endymion* and *Isabella,* ever so helplessly aimless and neurotic as Mr. Barker's central character? About this character there may linger reminiscences of the pernicious ' Johnny Keats ' legend, but resemblance goes no nearer. And the unprecedented prose seems a farrago of influences ranging from the Oscar Wilde of *Salome* to some blundering imitations of Mr. Empson being ambiguous.

On the question of Mr. Barker's subject matter, I find myself driven into line with the school of critics who maintain that literature too much divorced from social realities is worthless. This

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does not prevent me from finding Mr. Macneice's poems very pleasing, for he is aware of the implications of his attitude and accepts them. But, with so many more urgent subjects at hand, I cannot be interested in the constant twiddling of the very unpleasant mind of Mr. Barker's hero, who displays practically the same characteristics in each story. We are led to believe that he is a sexual pervert, mentally unbalanced, and somewhat of a masochist. It needs the genius of a Dostoievsky to make such matters seem of vital importance.

Mr. Barker is aware of some of the criticisms that will be made. I don't know whether this is a virtue or a fault. It betrays his indecision, and seems to show that even he, himself, does not believe, altogether in what he is doing.—' "Is this," I overhear, " the garrulity of the autobiographist, or the pretentious and dull soliloquising of the monologue novel?" " And I respect the query and proffer retort".'

Yet the retort is so unsatisfactory that he is obliged to repeat the question a little later.

The second fragment *The Bacchant* is slightly preferable to the first. It is just as hysterical, but there seems to be some trace of a not insincere emotion.

And, lastly, here is a typical sample of the prose that readers may make their own estimate.

> ' One, being loved, embezzled my vitality, took from under my heart the actual foundations of my being, and in return, rendering no ineradicable nectarine kiss (the desire for which I cannot ever obliterate from my imagination), left me here to lie, discarded, in the confines of my body's cell and, attempting to recapture his presence, only ineffectually, only tormentingly, recapture.'

Mr. Macneice is not a great poet—in these days of superlatives, it is, perhaps, necessary to state this—but, to me, he is far more pleasing than many better-known contemporary poets. He has the great virtue of being entirely unaffected which, especially in view of the attitude he takes, is a definite achievement. He is what the unsympathetic might call a dilettante, and he is quite aware of this. He is also aware of the complicated social background of the time, and of the isolation which it imposes, of necessity, on a man

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who finds his greatest delight in what so many consider the surface things of life—not only those things which must remain the same whatever social upheaval may take place, but in the sensual impressions that are a direct result of contemporary conditions.

> But yet there is beauty narcotic and deciduous
> In this vast organism grown out of us ;
> On all the traffic-islands stand white globes like moons,
> The city's haze is clouded amber that purrs and croons,
> And tilting by the noble curve bus after tall bus comes
> With an osculation of yellow light, with a glory like chrysanthemums.

These lines are not typical of Mr. Macneice at his best—the fourth line is rather reminiscent of Miss Sitwell, and there are other instances of the same thing—but the poem in which they occur *An Eclogue for Christmas,* is one of the best in the book in its poise and honesty. For Mr. Macneice is not ashamed to confess pleasure, even where he knows it to be inferior, and is thus superior to many who will not admit questionable partialities for fear of damaging their status.

He does not find it necessary to be bitter or savage about the Communists, who, he knows, must, inevitably destroy him and his like, though he is mildly ironical in *To a Communist* and *Turf-stacks*. Yet, at the same time, his attitude is his weakness ; his lack of adequate centre gives a slight air of floppiness even to his best work, and makes several of the poems seem unnecessarily trivial. One of the best, *The Individualist Speaks* summarises the whole attitude well. He has a good eye for visual images and has produced in *Morning Sun* and others, some of the best purely descriptive poetry of recent years, though even here we feel it loses by being attached to nothing. A typical poem, *A Contact,* may be quoted—it appears to be a variation on Laforgue's

' Oh, qu'ils sont pittoresques, les trains manqués.'

> The trains pass and the trains pass, chains of lighted windows.
> A register in an unknown language
> For these are the trains in which one never goes.

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The familiar rhythm but the unknown implications
Delight like a dead language
Which never shocks us by banal revelations.

So listening for the night express coming down the way
I receive the expected whistle of the engine
Sharp and straight on the ear like stigmata.

It is by no means the best poem in the book, but it is certainly typical.

The second verse seems to me to provide a wholly successful image, though the ending seems to lose this spontaneity. Mr. Macneice has a command of rhythm, which never becomes, in his hands either facile or crabbed. Even his worst poems almost deceive us at a first reading, for this reason.

It is always more easy to point out the defects of an author than to show his merits, and I feel I may have praised Mr. Macneice, without giving sufficient proof ; in any case, it would be a pity for anyone interested in poetry not to read him.

F. CHAPMAN.

WILLIAM EMPSON'S VERSE

POEMS, by William Empson (Chatto & Windus, 6/-).

Publishers in recent years have been generous towards poets. The young aspirant has hardly finished his apprenticeship before he is encouraged to come before the public with a collection of poems. It has been peculiarly exasperating that the work of one of the most interesting of contemporary poets has remained hidden in the comparative obscurity of the 1928 files of the *Cambridge Review* and in undergraduate journals of that period now extinct. Messrs. Chatto & Windus have done the public a service in making these poems generally accessible. It is now possible to see on what evidence the general high estimate rests. We have the greater part of these earlier poems revised and polished, together with those written more recently.

Great things have been said of Mr. Empson. The dust-cover reminds one that in *New Bearings* he was singled out with one other

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as the most promising of the younger writers. And in that painfully condensed work he received the most convincing account of his importance that the present reviewer has seen. One can only repeat and paraphrase what is said once and for all in *New Bearings*. But the present volume enables us to state that the number of poems which justify his high reputation is extremely small and almost wholly confined to poems written before 1929. The lesser poems throw light on the successes and reveal the bent which seems to have prevented any further development on the lines of the early good poems.

Not many poems reach the level of *To An Old Lady*. It is a triumph of tone; the subtle sharp fluctuations are impelled on the reader; one is driven breathlessly to respond to the rapid changes of attitude, to bring together the ideas brought from such different spheres. The mental play of resolution, combination and comparison calls for the alertest reading. But the attention required for this and the other good poems is not that of the cross-word order. The allusions to unfamiliar bits of knowledge are rare and not essential. What is required is a general sensitiveness and a willingness to open our minds to combinations of thoughts and feelings which would not occur to the ordinary person. It is, in short, the attention demanded by the poetry of Wit. In *Arachne* we come nearest to the traditional sources. Man ' twixt devil and deep sea '

> King spider, walks the velvet roof of streams:
> Must bird and fish, must god and beast avoid:
> Dance, like nine angels, on pin-point extremes.

The ' surface tension ' idea is developed organically out of this. It is used to give biting point to the personal ending of the poem.

> We two suffice. But oh beware, whose vain
> Hydroptic soap my meagre water saves.

Such mastery over technique is extraordinary. What Mr. Eliot said of the Metaphysicals on the closeness of feeling and thought could well be repeated here. Whether this is the main stream of tradition in poetry may yet be questioned; the merit of these poems can be shown without elaborate argument by placing them alongside any fair selection of contemporary verse. They have a strongly personal stamp, an independent rhythm.

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The characteristics familiar to us from seventeenth century verse —the involved syntax, following the thought in all its windings, the levity enforcing seriousness, the sparse ' Shakespearean ' use of language—are combined in the little handful of poems the nucleus of which appeared in *Cambridge Poetry*. What the rest of the book provides is these elements in disassociation. There is the pleasing mockery of *Rolling The Lawn* and the neat *Invitation to Juno*. Such experiments are well worth making. What is disquieting is the great number of poems (especially the later ones) in which neither tone nor rhythm are present. *Sea Voyage* and *High Dive*, for instance, contain a surprising number of ideas brought together, but brought together, it seems, only to show that it could be done. With each new turn of thought the poem—the words—does not leap but drones dully on. *Bacchus* (first published, presumably, in 1933) when compared with *Arachne*, gives the lie to any suggestion of development. What seems lacking in the poem is the 'rich and strongly characteristic life ' so noticeable in the earlier poem.

The general fault noticed here (pleasure in subtlety for its own sake) can coexist with vigorous poetic activity. (One might compare the occasional outburst of the same interest in *Seven Types of Ambiguity*). But when the output is so small the effect is likely to be to render the talent sterile. For lack of material to exercise the technique on, the poet's main interest has become the technique itself in so far as it concerns the manipulation of ideas, the knotting of varied strands of learning, and the playing with word sequences and puns. Let us hope that he will strike a field worthy of his resources. Meanwhile the volume provides us with the material to understand what it is to be a modern poet; how to avoid the wrong kind of imitation; examples of striking success; the exhibition of a fine intelligence applied and misapplied.

H. A. MASON.

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HUGH MACDIARMID

SECOND HYMN TO LENIN AND OTHER POEMS, by Hugh Macdiarmid (Stanley Nott, 3/6).

It is a great tribute to Hugh Macdiarmid to say that we find nothing either amusing or offensive in his characteristic attitude, which is that of the inspired Poet—the nobly indignant genius—of the Romantic tradition. But ' Romantic ' is an unfortunate word if it suggests the usual self-dramatizing vanity, the petty egotism enjoying its *saeva indignatio,* the feminine gush of stoic pride and self-pity. Macdiarmid exhibits a truly fine disinterestedness and convinces us that we have here rare character if not rare genius. This disinterestedness, this character, this profound seriousness, distinguishes him again from the better-known of the young Left-wing poets. The title-poem, *Second Hymn to Lenin,* is sufficiently a success to deserve inclusion in the ideal anthology (which would be a very small one) of contemporary poetry. It is an impressive product of the endeavour to recreate a tradition—to find some equivalent for the advantages that Burns enjoyed.

Had there been such a tradition actually alive Macdiarmid might have done a great deal more with his talent. As it is, the variety of manners he uses and of influences he reveals in this small collection shows what a difficult *ad hoc* achievement was the Scottish manner of the *Hymn.* The most important of the influences apparent are the later Yeats (see, e.g., *' With a Lifting of the Head,' At the Graveside)* and D. H. Lawrence (see, e.g., *One of the Principal Causes of War, The Wild Duck).* Among his epigrammatic pieces *Another Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries* deserves noting: it ought, in fact, to be permanently coupled with Professor Housman's famous *Epitaph.*

F. R. LEAVIS.

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THE POET'S TONGUE

THE POET'S TONGUE, by W. H. Auden and John Garrett (Bell, vol I, 2/-, vol. II, 2/4; General Edition, 1 Vol., 6/-).

What to do with the specimen copies which the dustmen won't remove is every schoolmaster's problem. Publishers spend large sums on circularising and the distribution of unsolicited copies of their text-books. So far as English is concerned the flow consists of editions of the safer classics (Shakespeare, the Romantics, novelists and essayists), manuals of grammar and composition, and scores of anthologies, the rickety inbred progeny of *Poems of To-day*. They never vary. The diffusion rate of ideas in education seems to be about nil, if it's fair to judge it in this way. The obvious commercial conditions perpetuate this state of affairs. Even if a publisher is conscious that there is some demand for a new kind of school book, he will be exceptional if he diverges from a deep and profitable rut.

The publishers of the anthology named above are perhaps unique in realizing that anything has happened in English literature since about 1915, and in having the courage to follow this up by producing new text-books. A few years ago they produced a practical criticism book for schools prompted by Dr. Richards' lectures. More recently they brought out *Prose of To-day*, of which its introduction says, ' This book is in the main a study of workmanship. It tries to show how modern prose goes about its work.' After this encouraging start, there follow two hundred pages of extracts from modern writers, with extensive commentary and questions cast to the end of the book—George Moore, Lawrence, C. E. Montague, Strachey, Yeats, and so on. But many potential users will find that the usefulness of the book is diminished, because no value distinctions are made between these authors: Ivor Brown and E. M. Forster are considered with equal solemnity.

The Poet's Tongue came out originally in two volumes for school use. Since then it has appeared in one volume as a ' general ' book, and in that form it has been widely welcomed by the reviewers, though they infrequently noticed or remarked the fact that it was meant for schools. This is a pity, for a merit of the anthology was thus missed: it is a complete break from the

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existing type of school anthology. To the ' normal boy,' and often to adults, labels such as ' poetry ' and ' prose ' can be a great nuisance. From the anthologies available up till now he gets the impression that poetry should be soothing, beautiful, metrical, or what not. Cramping conceptions of poetry can interfere with the enjoyment of many poems that do not conform, say, to the practice of the Georgian collections. Result: when confronted (for example) with Pound's ' These died in any case ' and Binyon's *For the Fallen,* many readers have difficulty in allowing the former to be poetry, in spite of a strong preference in its favour. In typical comments the Binyon poem gets marks for being ' good poetry, but dangerous propaganda,' ' preferable as poetry, but beautifully written.' Readers seeking a guide naturally cling to such helpful simplifications as ' Poetry must be rhymed, rhythmical,' etc., etc.

It may be best to read no poetry at all till sixteen or so. The risks in reading none are at any rate less than those involved in reading unfit poetry. It's very doubtful if any readers would be lost if all literature and appreciation lessons were shelved till then. If poetry is to be a part of the curriculum, this anthology provides an excellent start. It can foster none of the usual preconceptions and limited tastes; it will acquaint its reader with a good deal of absolutely good poetry and much that is good for its purpose. I should think it will fertilize the interest of any potential reader of poetry: other anthologies have done the opposite. And it is clearly the work of people who understand their readers' interests; there is no attempt to impose taste. Not much more than this can be asked from an anthology meant for schools.

The authors don't prescribe ages, but the first volume seems suitable for readers of nine or ten to about fourteen, though I'm told it is very successful with a form averaging about fifteen. There is a wide range—nursery rhymes, nonsense rhymes, odd or amusing scraps coming under no particular head, ragtime from Dryden to Vachell Lindsay, ballads, sea shanties, besides fresh selections from Donne, Blake, Chaucer, Tennyson, Lawrence, etc. This volume ends with an extract from the Mummers' Play and the Revesby Play—both these and the Vachell Lindsay have been tried successfully in some schools, but haven't appeared in school books. A welcome addition would be some direction for finding the tunes of the folk-songs; the tunes often seem much better than the words,

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and they are very easily learnt at any age. There is an introduction in a persuasive tone aimed at the schoolmaster. Perhaps it is rather short to convince the reader who doesn't already sympathise with the views expressed.

The second volume roughly suits the ages fifteen or sixteen to seventeen. It reflects recent tendencies in criticism (the picking-up of the ' tradition of wit '), but without tendentiousness. Besides interesting selections from the Romantics and others, Milton, the Metaphysicals, Dryden, Pope, Wilfred Owen, Hopkins and T. S. Eliot are represented. The choice is such that it is likely to send readers to the sources of the anthologised pieces. A bibliography and some hints for further reading (what to read in Dryden, for instance) would have been a help here. Perhaps the compilers were careful to avoid being didactic. And if it had been part of their plan, music references for the madrigals would have been welcome: the ' Silver Swan ' needs to be heard. One or two selections would be more at home in the first volume—the aeroplane epic, for example.

Several anthologies of this kind ought to have been brought out years ago. Another of equal value could easily be made without repeating any item from *The Poet's Tongue*—it is the principle that is new and important. It will be interesting to see if it has any imitators. In any case it is bound to let in a good deal of fresh air in places where it is badly needed, and it should help to break the vicious-circle—school-masters passing on to pupils the outworn ideas and insipid tastes which they themselves acquired at school.

There are other books needed as much as the one under review. One is a large anthology, superficially more ' academic ' for the general reader and universities. It would be in chronological order, and in it one could trace the tradition of wit, its decline and resumption. But the list of desiderata would take up too much space. It would by no means consist of innovations: there is no cheap edition of Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy*, and we have yet to come across an inexpensive Shakespeare, giving unbowdlerized plays, one to a volume.

DENYS THOMPSON.

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STATISTICAL CRITICISM

SHAKESPEARE'S IMAGERY AND WHAT IT TELLS US, by Caroline F. E. Spurgeon (Cambridge University Press, 25/-).

The idea that there are other approaches to Shakespeare than that of Bradley seems by now to have become completely respectable. At the same time, it is as if there had been a conspiracy to show up these other approaches as inherently tedious and pedantic. Even Professor Wilson Knight's pertinent and stimulating analyses dwindled into the kind of irrelevant traffic in symbolism represented by *The Shakespearean Tempest*. Professor Spurgeon has gone one better: she has 'listed and classified and counted every image in every play thrice over.' She has even compiled illustrative charts and diagrams—there are seven in this book—which look like the statistical reports of the Empire Marketing Board.

The first obvious objection—What exactly is to be called an image, and of what?—is considered in an appendix, where it is explained that certain images have to be classified under two headings. But what could happen to, say, the passage in *Antony and Cleopatra* Act IV, Sc. xv—

> O, see my women,
> The crown o' the earth doth melt. My lord!
> O, withered is the garland of the war
> The soldier's pole is fall'n: young boys and girls
> Are level now with men; the odds is gone,
> And there is nothing left remarkable
> Beneath the visiting moon.

—where there is a complex imaginative fusion of images? 'Any count of this kind,' says Professor Spurgeon, ' must to some extent be an approximate one, dependent on the *literary judgment* and methods of the person who has compiled it.' I have italicized the phrase ' literary judgment,' because it is constantly suggested throughout the book that we have here something scientific, that can be weighed and measured, something tangible and objective, susceptible of a statistical approach which will rule out such nebulous quantities as the reactions of personal sensibility. In short, the method very easily becomes, like Robertson's verse-tests, another

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will-o'-the-wisp offering an illusory ' scientific ' short cut instead of the more difficult path of personal evaluation.

That is the radical criticism of the whole undertaking. The only really valuable consideration of Shakespeare's imagery would involve a strictly critical approach: every image must be scrupulously related to its context, must be considered in the light of the sense, feeling, tone, intention and rhythm of the passage in which it stands. But, as a matter of fact, the first half of this book is hardly concerned with literature at all. There is one chapter comparing Shakespeare's imagery with that of five arbitrarily selected contemporaries (why include Dekker and Massinger?) and another with that of Marlowe and Bacon. The latter proves that the evidence of the images is against any identification of Shakespeare with Bacon: it all seems very unnecessary. The remaining chapters in this section are an attempt to reconstruct Shakespeare's character, starting from the assumption that a poet tends to give himself away in his images; there are chapters on his senses, his tastes and interests, and his thought. There may be something in all this, and the chapter on ' Association of Ideas ' may possibly assist in determining work of doubtful authorship, but in general it can only have the most rudimentary biographical interest. What permanent profit is there in knowing that a certain eddy referred to in *Venus and Adonis* is really under such and such a bridge in Warwickshire or that Shakespeare saw the martlets' nests of *Macbeth* on the walls of Berkeley Castle? There seems to be no dust that Professor Spurgeon has forborne to dig.

Part II. is more relevant to literary criticism, though even here reservations must be made. The section deals with ' The function of the Imagery as Background and Undertone in Shakespeare's Art ', and it incorporates the earlier pamphlet *Leading Motives in the Imagery of Shakespeare's Tragedies*. This, in fact, remains the best thing in the book, for here there is some convincing attempt to show how in the mature plays the imagery was *used* to contribute to the total imaginative effect. The chapters on the comedies and the romances contain some useful observations but that on the histories is less convincing. One cannot help feeling that Professor Spurgeon ought to have shown that such leading motives as she is able to discover in, for instance, the *Henry VI* plays or *Richard II*, are quite insignificant

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in comparison with those of the mature tragedies. The whole of this section serves to show that there is no substitute for literary criticism. It is a depressing fact that so much of modern Shakespearean study seems to be little more than an industrious search for such a substitute.

The book is excellently produced, but I cannot see why even seven coloured charts should make the price so high.

R. G. Cox.

TRADITIONS AND THE ACADEMIC CRITIC

THE ACHIEVEMENT OF T. S. ELIOT, by F. O. Matthiessen (Oxford University Press, 7/6).

Mr. Eliot has been long enough before the public for our critics to have 'estimated his achievement.' Indeed among the extant criticism there is ample material for a developed treatment. The time is now ripe for an 'academic' work which should place Mr. Eliot in the tradition, as he himself has described in the celebrated essay. Indeed we have learnt from him what must be the work of such a critic and what gifts he must possess. To put it briefly, he must have a sense of the present and of the past and the ability to see 'the best work of our time and the best work of twenty-five hundred years ago with the same eyes.' The title and sub-title (An Essay on the Nature of Poetry) of the present book and the author's connection with an eminent University arouse the liveliest expectations—expectations which I must say at once they fail to satisfy. Instead they indicate very fairly what we are to expect from our academies and in what way they fail to perform the work projected by Mr. Eliot.

The writer approaches his subject with due humility and pleasing conscientiousness; as far as I can tell, all the good criticism has been drawn on, and a great number of articles and reviews and unpublished material by Mr. Eliot brought to bear on the main theme. But there is in the handling of this material and in the comments on the poems a marked insensitivity which blurs the final appraisal. It is unfortunate that the later critical writings of Mr.

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Eliot are taken at his own valuation as being more mature than his earlier works. If it was a mark of excessive scrupulousness to apologise for the obviousness of one's comments three or four years ago when elementary blunders were still general, to expound once more in all solemnity these same commonplaces is hardly treating the public with respect. But where other criticism of Mr. Eliot has not penetrated this book may be offered as a useful guide round the notions connected with the poems.

And to a more instructed reader this book will appeal most on account of the often interesting and original details in the course of the argument. But an adequate conception of the poetry of Mr. Eliot he will not find. It is this success in detail due to careful research (there is a very neat chapter on the 'influences'), and this failure in presenting a total valuation that I consider academic. And if one could shortly account for this failure one might find it in the essay already referred to. Mr. Matthiessen has tried to absorb Mr. Eliot into the tradition, to assure his readers that the poetry is the poetry they have been accustomed to, and when one or two misconceptions are cleared away in the light of Mr. Eliot's own critical remarks, the poetry will be seen to fit into the tradition. This, though true, should not be the main emphasis in an account of Mr. Eliot's poetry written by a contemporary. There is still to be done the other process described in *Tradition and the Individual Talent*:

> 'Whoever has approved this idea of order, of the form of European, of English literature will not find it preposterous that the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past. And the poet who is aware of this will be aware of great difficulties and responsibilities.'

And the critic, one might say, who is aware of this will be academic in a greater and nobler sense of the word than we can now use to describe this book.

H. A. MASON.

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GROPIUS

THE NEW ARCHITECTURE AND THE BAUHAUS, by Walter Gropius. Translated by P. Morton Shand (Faber and Faber, 6/-).

First and foremost, Gropius is an architect. In the practical activities of designing and building, he has carried architecture a step farther forward. Accepting the elements of the functionalist discipline, he has created with them an architecture that is more than functional, since it is a formal art of spatial harmony. And in doing this he has never abandoned the discipline of his materials to indulge in the romantic gestures of some of his French contemporaries. It is still possible to mistake his discipline for æsthetic negation, and French romanticism for the true creative energy. But mere modishness becomes evident in architecture almost as quickly as in a woman's dress ; real sensibility takes longer to discover.

To the æsthetic advance we must add the technical. Gropius's architecture is based on continuous research, and on the utilization of scentific discoveries. These concern the durability of materials, sound insulation, heating, ventilation, lighting, and above all the invention of devices which enable pre-fabricated units to be used, and so mass-produced. But both the architectural and the technical aspects of Gropius's work I must leave to others who are more competent to explain them and assess them in relation to the achievements of his contemporaries. For the moment I am concerned with the aesthetic significance of his work, and more particularly with certain sociological aspects which determine the aesthetic development of that work.

Gropius was the founder and first director of that educational institution which has come to be known by the short title: the Bauhaus. This was much more than a school of architecture. Already before the war Gropius had shown his capabilities as an architect ; he had also experienced the limitations of his environment. ' I saw that an architect cannot hope to realize his ideas unless he can influence the industry of his country sufficiently for a new school of design to arise as a result ; and unless that school

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succeeds in acquiring authoritative significance.' When the opportunity occurred, and he was invited to take charge of the Weimar School of Arts and Crafts, Gropius resolved to devote at least a part of his career to this essential preparatory work.

It will be noticed that two aims are expressed in the sentence I have quoted. In the first of these, the creation of a new school of design, Gropius succeeded on all fronts. The Bauhaus changed the face of German industry, and eventually of European and American industry. You cannot enter a house anywhere in the world that has any pretence to modernity which does not bear, in some of its details if not in its whole design, some trace of the Bauhaus influence. For the Bauhaus gave conscious direction to a new aesthetic impulse—the impulse based on the acceptation of the machine and its products, and taking the elements of such production (precision, economy, uniformity) as the canons of its beauty.

But in the second aim, the acquisition of authority, Gropius was not so successful. A certain opposition manifested itself, not only among the academic exponents of an obsolete æsthetic, but more disastrously in a political context. The German nation has a special aptitude for associating objective facts with general theories of a more emotional origin (*sotto voce*: Marx) and the experimental tendencies of the Bauhaus, which admittedly involved social questions, became associated with revolutionary tendencies in general. In spite of the fact that Gropius himself was in no sense a politician, and in spite of the fact that the teaching at the Bauhaus was entirely technological, the political animus persisted, and when a reactionary fascism finally triumphed in Germany, the Bauhaus and all it stood for was immediately abolished.

Instead of 'abolished,' it would be truer to say that it was scattered. The movement lost its headquarters, but it is now international, and nothing can finally suppress a force so firmly based on economic, social and aesthetic realities: nothing but the complete eclipse of reason and the intervention of a new dark age. The economic drive is the fundamental one: steel and concrete may still present certain technical difficulties, but these are trivial in comparison with the economic advantages. The opposition to their use is, indeed, no longer in any sense technical, but social and æsthetic. The conversion of our cities from ugly and incoherent

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conglomerations of brick and stone, dangerous tangles of disordered transport and inconceivably wasteful organization, into spacious hierarchies of light, ease and speed, and of all the human virtues which can be developed in such an environment—this conversion is an immediate technical possibility, and is only held up by a system of private ownership and an economy of profit. Within that system it is only possible to make a few isolated demonstrations, and a change of system would still have to wait for a change of heart and habit. Which brings us to the aesthetic question.

How persistently an aesthetic prejudice can outlast the economic realities is being revealed at the present moment in Russia, where the architectural development has been deliberately slowed down, and even reversed, to enable an aesthetically starved people to babble in the dead language of bourgeois styles. Presumably this people will sooner or later call for a living language bearing some relation to the proletarian basis of their society, but meanwhile the modern architect must suck his thumbs and look on whilst a band of senile academicians, dug out of their enforced retirement, revel once more in the solid inanities of neo-classicism. One can only hope that the farce will not last long enough for a resurrection of the Gothic Revival! Whatever excuses the Soviet bureaucrats may offer for such theatricals, an answer will be found in the hard logic and the tempered idealism of Gropius's credo. Above all, they will find an answer to the most shallow of their assumptions—an assumption which they share with their bourgeois colleagues in all countries: that modern architecture lacks an aesthetic content. The new aesthetic involves more than architecture, as I have attempted to show in *Art and Industry*; it is fundamental to the modern movement in all the arts. Its elements—harmony, repose, proportion—are the elements of all classical beauty. But it demands for its appreciation an intellectual effort; an energetic dismissal of many romantic prejudices. In art, no less than in the sciences which seem to be more immediately concerned, that is the prerequisite of any rebuilding of our disordered world.

HERBERT READ.

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DOUGHTY AND HOPKINS

CHARLES M. DOUGHTY: A STUDY OF HIS PROSE AND VERSE, by Anne Treneer (Cape, 7/6).

SELECTED PASSAGES FROM 'THE DAWN IN BRITAIN,' arranged and with an Introduction by Barker Fairley (Duckworth, 3/6).

To find Doughty in his dealings with the English language at all akin to Hopkins is to betray a complete inappreciation of Hopkins's poetry. It should not have been necessary to say this, but plainly it is. The word is being passed round that Doughty and Hopkins, Victorian rebels, will go bracketed (Blake-Burns, Dryden-Pope) down to posterity. They are both extravagantly and wilfully odd, uncouth, crabbed, and defiant of common English usage—that seems to be the argument. 'One looks forward,' says Miss Treneer, and she has the endorsement of eminent reviewers, 'to the day when young poets and critics such as Mr. Cecil Day Lewis will number the author of *Adam Cast Forth* with Wilfred Owen, Gerard Manley Hopkins and T. S. Eliot among their immediate ancestors.'

Now to appreciate Hopkins is to lose all sense of oddity; but Doughty, in the very nature of his achievement, remains insistently and essentially odd—that is why there is not the slightest danger of his having any influence at all, in verse or prose. He is a nobly massive eccentric, a great English Character. Hopkins is central and a great English poet. His apparent oddity disappears because he is working in the spirit of the living English language; all his efforts are to realize this spirit in all its vigour and at its highest intensity. He condemned archaism as manifesting a wrong attitude towards the language—the language as spoken in the poet's time. It is significant that Bridges, who would have nothing to do with his friend's 'oddity,' should have gladly acclaimed Doughty's rebellion against 'Victorian English': Doughty was merely odd and eccentric and of scholarly interest and not in the least disturbing (though he is a rich and an easy subject for academic treatises and lectures). At the best, with the aim he served, he

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could succeed merely in creating an impressively eccentric monument. To talk of his refreshing or renovating the language is absurd; there was not the slightest chance of his having any effect whatsoever upon it or upon subsequent literature (if there had been he would have needed denouncing as a pernicious influence).

Even to talk, with Miss Treneer, of his effecting ' a scholar's enrichment of current language ' is a radical misrepresentation. Doughty pursued his word-hoarding in a spirit of rejection of current language: that comes out forcibly in his constant, extreme and wanton defiance of English idiom and word-order. He collected his words (and both Miss Treneer and Mr. Barker Fairley insist that it was individual words he was interested in) because they were strange, odd, antique and not current. What advantage did he gain by putting ' spirituous ' for ' spiritual,' ' charret ' for ' chariot,' 'drenched' for ' drowned,' ' girdlestead ' and ' middle ' for ' waist,' ' contrast ' for ' resist,' ' maidenchild ' for ' girl,' ' rumour ' for ' noise,' ' carol ' for ' dance,' or by writing: ' The truant smiling Beduins have answered again that they could no tales ' ? His style, in prose and verse, carries to an extreme the spirit of Victorian romanticism—except that, as Miss Treneer says, ' he did not spend his time sighing for heroic days, he tried to recreate them.' And he does marvellously succeed in making Victorian romanticism look truly heroic. But the heroism that affects the English language, English poetry and us is Hopkins's.

Mr. Barker Fairley's selections from *The Dawn in Britain* are useful; they give a fair idea of Doughty's poetic quality and importance. Only an innocence about poetry could lend itself to the superlative references cited in the Introduction—a kind of innocence represented by Miss Treneer's remark: ' A series of scenes from *The Dawn in Britain* would make a magnificent film or searchlight tattoo.' Against this it is enough to say (while admitting that there are interesting passages) that Doughty's verse exhibits an utter—and not merely a Miltonic—rejection of English idiom.

As for *Travels in Arabia Deserta,* it will remain a respected but little-read minor classic.

F. R. LEAVIS.

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THE POWYS BROTHERS, by Richard Heron Ward (The Bodley Head, 7/6).

This book was bound to come, and it's no good making a fuss about it. 'Literary brothers of the peculiar genius and high achievement of John Cowper Powys, T. F. Powys and Llewellyn Powys are a rare opportunity for the critic and biographer, only equalled for interest and importance by that offered by the Brontë sisters.'—In thus giving us the inevitable the blurb at any rate indicates a way of saying inoffensively (one hopes) what the book must be mainly an opportunity for saying. There is, then, only one Powys just as there is only one Brontë. The Powys family is no doubt a remarkable one, and the other writing members of it may perhaps be less wholly negligible than admirers of T. F. Powys recognize. But for such admirers they are merely a nuisance. 'I'm suspicious of these Powyses,' an extremely distinguished critic is reported to have remarked, and such an attitude would not be altogether inexcusable in a fastidious person who had first picked up one of the philosophic works, or one of the creative works of genius *manqués*, of Mr. J. C. Powys and then the present work.

It is significant that Mr. Ward, who has no inkling of the pre-eminence of T. F. Powys among the brothers, should have no inkling either of the pre-eminence of *Mr. Weston's Good Wine* among T. F. Powys's books. Indeed, he slips over the masterpiece with hardly a comment. But then, to judge by his general commentary, he takes no interest in T. F. Powys's art. This commentary (though 'art' is referred to a good deal) concerns itself mainly with the artist's 'philosophy' and with discussing him in terms of Freud. No doubt Mr. Powys himself can talk about Freud, and no doubt, too, such talk might have some relevance to the treatment of the themes of Love and Death in *Mr. Weston's Good Wine*, and to the way in which the balance maintained between them in that book gives in to Death in *Unclay* and *Fables*. But no one interested in these books as works of art is likely to feel that Freud in any way explains them—that is, treats their themes more profoundly.

Indeed, those who believe *Mr. Weston's Good Wine* to be one of the great things in English literature and *Fables* to be also a classic are likely to be very exacting about criteria of relevance before they will allow Freud or Freudians any say in literary criticism.

F.R.L.

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THE ORAGE LEGEND

SELECTED ESSAYS AND CRITICAL WRITINGS OF A. R. ORAGE. Edited by Herbert Read and Denis Saurat (Stanley Nott, 10/6).

This book will be opened with some eagerness by those whose acquaintance with the *New English Weekly* leaves them wondering over the legend of A. R. Orage. They will hope to find some explanation of the influence he is said to have wielded and the enormous impression he appears to have made in distinguished quarters. They will be disappointed. This selection from Orage's writings was, no doubt, undertaken as an act of piety, but it will not help to prolong his reputation. For what it exhibits to us is a mind of no distinction or force of any kind. There is a certain pontifical egotism as of a would-be Arnold Bennett, but Orage has none of the liveliness and vigour that make *Books and Persons*, Bennett's best journalism, still enjoyable. In fact, he shows here as a very poor journalist, while certainly offering no grounds for being taken seriously as a thinker or critic. He does indeed offer evidence of unusually wide reading (for a journalist), and he accosts with assurance a wide range of topics. But his air of cogency and incisiveness is not even superficially convincing; the effect is lame, limp and dull. He clearly thinks he is thinking, and as clearly doesn't know what thinking is—which, of course, is the almost inevitable result of a journalistic career, however fine the natural endowment the journalist may have started with, and however high the level at which he is supposed to work.

That Orage had some compelling personal quality we are forced, by the nature of his reputation, to conclude. Yet on the evidence of the *New English Weekly* it is difficult to see why he should have been reputed a brilliant editor, even. Was what followed on that prolonged inaugural fanfare anything but a pitiful flop? One remembers a good contributor or two, but that is all. And it appeared that Orage was ready to encourage the most brassily empty young careerist.

Perhaps you have to be a Social Crediter to appreciate him.

F.R.L.

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THE LAST EPICUREAN

THE LAST PURITAN : A MEMOIR IN THE FORM OF A NOVEL, by George Santayana (Constable, 8/6).

For once the familiar blurb about ' exquisite urbanity and humour,' ' perfect prose ' and ' a mind of rare subtlety ' is justified. Many readers of Professor Santayana's lectures and essays must have remarked his latent gifts for novel-writing, for instance his genius for dramatising his criticism of abstractions and the habitual ease with which he produces explanatory metaphors and anecdotal similes by way of enforcing a point ; also that his criticisms of the views of (for example) William James, Royce and Emerson are inseparable from the portraits of these writers that they go to build up.

This bent towards the use of fiction as a medium for criticism is traceable in his works through several stages. The first stage, a kind of witty generalization from observed facts, is typified in this account of the effects on Catholicism of the American environment (*Character and Opinion in the United States*, p. 47) :

> ' Consider, for instance, the American Catholics, of whom there are nominally many millions, and who often seem to retain their ancestral faith sincerely and affectionately. This faith took shape during the decline of the Roman empire ; it is full of large disillusions about this world and minute illusions about the other. It is ancient, metaphysical, poetic, elaborate, ascetic, autocratic, and intolerant. It confronts the boastful natural man, such as the American is, with a thousand denials and menaces. Everything in American life is at the antipodes to such a system. Yet the American Catholic is entirely at peace. His tone in everything, even in religion, is cheerfully American. It is wonderful how silently, amicably, and happily he lives in a community whose spirit is profoundly hostile to that of his religion. He seems to take stock in his church as he might in a gold mine—sure it is a grand, dazzling, unique thing ; and perhaps he masks, even to himself, his purely imaginative ardour about it, with the pretext that it is sure to make his fortune both in this life and in the next. His church, he will tell you, is a first-rate church to belong to ; the priests are fine fellows, like the policemen ; the Sisters

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are dear noble women, like his own sisters ; his parish is flourishing, and always rebuilding its church and founding new schools, orphan asylums, sodalities, confraternities, perpetual adoration societies. No parish can raise so much money for any object, or if there are temporary troubles, the fact still remains that America has three Cardinals and that the Catholic religion is the biggest religion on earth. Attachment to his church in such a temper brings him into no serious conflict with his Protestant neighbours. They live and meet on common ground. Their respective religions pass among them for family matters, private and sacred, with no political implications.'

A later form of this tactic is to be found in his criticism of the new Humanism, which on inspection is evidently rooted in a personal criticism—say, of the late Irving Babbitt.

' May not the ardent humanist cry (and not in the wilderness): Let us be well-balanced, let us be cultivated, let us be high-minded ; let us control ourselves, as if we were wild ; let us chasten ourselves, as if we had passions ; let us learn the names and date of all famous persons ; let us travel and see all the pictures that are starred in Baedeker ; let us establish still more complete museums at home, and sometimes visit them in order to show them to strangers ; let us build still more immense libraries, containing all known books, good, bad and indifferent, and let us occasionally write reviews of some of them, so that the public, at least by hearsay, may learn which are which?'

(*The Genteel Tradition at Bay.*)

The complete conversion of this critical method into a form suitable for the novel is illustrated by a characteristic turn in the Prologue to *The Last Puritan*. The author and one of the characters in the novel are discussing the case of the hero, who represents the type of mind which ' is convinced, on puritan grounds, that it is wrong to be a puritan. And remains a puritan notwithstanding.' Instantly he produces

' The case of Miss Pickleworth of Boston who declared she envied me for not having a conscience, which I thought rather insolent of her, until she went on to explain, gasping with earnestness, that she was *sure* people were *far too* conscientious and

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self-critical ; that it was so *wrong* and *cruel* to stunt oneself ; so *cowardly* to avoid the greatest possible wealth of experience ; and that every night before she went to bed she *made a point* of thinking over all she had said and done during the day, for fear she might have been *too particular*.'

It is clearly impossible in this instance to decide whether he has started with an actual piece of life or dramatized a theoretical case ; it might be either, but only a novelist could have reproduced in writing Miss Pickleworth (name and all) complete with the earnest gasp in her idiom as in her voice.

His attitude to the world of ideas no less than of the senses has always seemed to be an artist's rather than a philosopher's, and this, while no doubt making him an object of suspicion to his fellow-thinkers, makes his philosophic writings enjoyable by the layman. It is notable, too, that he has (again unlike a philosopher) a sensitiveness to literature that has produced first-class literary criticism (his essays on Browning, Dickens, Shelley and Whitman are all beyond praise, and differ only from his critiques of Bergson, Russell, William James and other thinkers in having works of art as their subject-matter: the intelligence at work and the method employed are the same for both sets of writers). His novel is therefore really a novel, not an arrangement of mouthpieces for philosophic speeches ; the moral tensions he is interested in arise of themselves from the fable and call for little explication ; and in his handling of them one is aware only of the (duly self-effacing) artist. The social fable is extended in all directions by the frequent symbolic implications, and behind the overt action one may sense an allegory of the moral life of man.

For as is to be expected, his concern is serious and with fundamentals—the moral environment which makes for or prevents the happiness of the individual. Professor Santayana, on whose heart the awful experience of being Professor of Philosophy at Harvard in the nineteen hundreds has evidently been deeply graven, has undertaken to expose the blighting effects of the nineteenth century New England Puritan ethos—what he long ago labelled the American Genteel Tradition—on a youth of great riches and considerable natural endowments. Oliver (Puritan ancestry—wittily displayed in detail—Great Falls High School, Williams College and Harvard,

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athlete in spite of himself and conscientious student) is revealed throughout his brief life of all-round frustration as ' the victim of congenital disease ; he suffered from a moral cramp, a clog in the wheel of every natural passion.' In contrast his cousin Mario (Catholic European heredity, Eton, Harvard and Oxford, lady-killer and man of the world) is, according to the author, able to secure and enjoy all the goods of life, including (if he had wanted them) the two successive objects of Oliver's unrequited affections, because he is ' at home in the grand tradition.' Oliver is crushed by the War, Mario light-heartedly floats through it (one recollects the essay ' Tipperary ' in *Soliloquies in England*. Finally, with his ' beautiful Donna Laura and charming children ' Mario ' will hand on the torch of true civilisation ' (either in spite of or because of being a member of the *Camelots du Roi)*. Professor Santayana is scrupulous not to load the dice in his own favour—for instance, Oliver has all the Puritan virtues, and Mario none of them. And the destructive side of the undertaking is admirably realized.

The first part of this thesis is naturally more convincing than the second. I say naturally, implying an English reader of the novel, and with regard to the positive side of the novel that reader may find himself impelled to ask some questions. With the general thesis no one is likely to quarrel ; what, in writing of Humanism, he stated thus: ' Only a morality frankly relative to man's nature is worthy of man,' is here given a particular illustration that enables him to declare, in the Epilogue and in his own person, ' Fortune will never smile on those who disown the living forces of nature.' The positive corollary is not lacking: ' Any future worth having will spring from men like (Mario), not from weedy intellectuals or self-inhibited puritans.'

There seems to be no self-protective irony, this author is evidently not disingenuous, and yet the proffered position affects one as surely too superficial to be seriously intended. Nevertheless it seems unlikely that so polite a writer should, late in life, have written his first novel merely to make fools of his readers. One cannot risk crudely assigning any precise point-of-view in the novel to the author, but it seems significant that whereas a naïve Catholic is for him an object of amusement, a naïve Anglican (maliciously presented in Oliver's fashionable New York cousin Edith) is an object of contemptuous amusement, and indeed the general im-

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pression the reader retains is that the Catholic tradition, provided you don't believe in the religious illusions, is supremely valuable, even perhaps indispensable ; similarly, he seems to affirm that the polish of Eton and Oxford, provided it has a European setting to preclude insularity, displays the very perfection of human grace.

Professor Santayana, as every reader of his must know, is a persuasive writer. He has no airs and all the graces. He seems, unusually, to be all the more a man of the world for being a philosopher, and contrives to be highly sophisticated without being either smart, knowing, superior, or even a little eyelid-weary. And (as is so evident in his criticism) his suave sophistication does not prevent him from being finely responsive to noble forms of thought and delicate intuitions. It is therefore with the greatest diffidence that a reviewer must bring any complaint against an outlook that Professor Santayana finds good enough for himself or even merely good enough for the rest of us. But to those of a later generation it is unlikely that Mario will seem so entirely acceptable as the source of a future worth having. *The Last Puritan* naturally (perhaps intentionally) invites comparison with that truly great memoir, *The Education of Henry Adams*. Henry Adams, though of an earlier breed than Professor Santayana's real or mythical hero, was qualified by tradition and education to have served as model for Oliver ; yet few responsible persons are likely to prefer Mario to him, or would not prefer a future sprung from Henry Adams (if they could get it).

I will take the first opening that presents itself to develop this case.

' "Tap an Eton mind," ' says Oliver, speaking for once out of character and therefore presumably on behalf of the novelist, ' "tap an Eton mind and you find the Odes of Horace ; tap a Groton mind, and you find the last number of an illustrated magazine." ' The second of these statements may well be true, but it is necessary to ask in what sense the first can be, assuming it to be true in any sense at all. To be Horatian as Horace was is of course impossible in nineteenth or twentieth century England ; there are as many versions of Horace as there are societies that have studied him, and we may pertinently recollect at this point that *Heraclitus* was perpetrated by a famous Eton master (would Professor Santayana declare that tap Cory's mind and you find the Greek Anthology

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and therefore—?). And moreover, to tap Henry Adam's mind, as we may readily do by reading his autobiography (and if not precisely a Groton mind he is the Boston Puritan product), is to be brought into contact with something immeasurably more impressive than the residue from a filtration of the Odes of Horace.

Here we have a characteristic instance of the general disparity in this novel between the destructive criticism and the implied criterion: the former is based on observed fact while the latter is born of willing self-delusion. As readers of ' The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy ' (in *Winds of Doctrine*), of *The Genteel Tradition at Bay* and of *Character and Opinion in the United States* can well imagine, Professor Santayana in his novel is radically critical of the American school and college and their inadequacies. But that is really no justification for his failure to apply the same critical discernment to the English academic scene. When he turns to that he presents a shocking spectacle—a surrender (which would be pardonable in a backwoodsman but Professor Santayana is himself a Latin in the grand style) to charm or glamour or whatnot ; the critical is replaced by the innocent eye. This must be a source of peculiar irritation to the English reader, who suffers not from the genteel tradition of New England but from an academic tradition which though different is not so obviously less pernicious and frustrating.

Henry Adams's despondent account of the intellectual climate of Harvard when he was a professor there is summed up thus: ' The lecture-room was futile enough, but the faculty-room was worse . . . Several score of the best-educated, most agreeable, and personally the most sociable people in America united in Cambridge to make a social desert that would have starved a polar bear.' Professor Santayana's account of Harvard in his time is an illustration of the same theme ; the effects on the American educational system and the consequent immaturity and starvation of the students, are convincingly mapped in the novel. But the implicit comparison he makes in favour of Oxford and Cambridge loses its force when one recollects having heard and read, from both senior and junior members of our older as well as of our modern universities, complaints of essentially the same nature. Professor Santayana is thus bolstering the complacency of an academic order that enjoys a genteel tradition of its own of some antiquity, and since a body of

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intelligent students of the humanities would appear to go down every year with a permanent grievance against their universities on this account (hungry sheep who have paid for pasture without in their opinion receiving at all adequate nourishment) this will not earn Professor Santayana their gratitude. In this connection one recalls his essay on Dons in *Soliloquies in England* (which apart from the critique of Dickens is significantly not a good book—or, to put it impersonally, is a book which, according to the dust-jacket of this novel, was found sympathetic by Dean Inge): those who think that the English universities no less than the American should have an educational function are likely to resent the assertion that dons are rightly a privileged collection of scholarly gentlemen who are to be endowed chiefly for being picturesque and rather comic, and for ' handing down as large and as pleasant a store as possible of academic habits, maxims and anecdotes.' And many of his admirers will be disappointed to find that he has chosen to bring the force of his own integrity to the support of vested interests which are necessarily hostile to integrity.

And this disagreement raises other doubts. For example, readers may ask whether the athletic code of the English public school is in fact so much less philistine in its compulsions than that of the pre-War American college ; whether the transcendental idealist tradition of American academics that Professor Santayana very naturally abominates differs in any way but in its greater prevalence from the *Hibbert Journal-Testament of Beauty* form of stultifying uplift which is so familiar an ingredient in the make-up of our higher educationists ; whether the English public-school tradition has been so much more markedly a source of sweetness and light and ' true civilization ' than the tradition of the Williams colleges ; and so on.

And thus one is led to a general criticism of Professor Santayana's attitude. Eton of course is for him by way of being a symbol—witness the discussion between Oliver and his father (pp.379-383) on ' the myth of Jacob's ladder ' : ' a picture of what the universe would be if the moral nature of man had made it . . . It is a poetic image. Those who mistake it for an account of the universe or of history or of destiny seem to me simply mad ; but like all good poetry, such an image marks the pitch to which moral culture has

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risen at some moment. To the morally cultivated, Jacob's ladder shines distinct and clear: it becomes vague and broken to the morally barbarous. Therefore I say, *Floreat Etona!*' etc.

So one is making a more general criticism than at first appears when one suggests that he is too easily satisfied with the alleged spiritual grace of the English public-school class. It is symptomatic that he does not care in this novel to probe below the surface or to engage in any strenuous justification of his apparent position. There is nothing in the least strenuous about this well-cushioned world; material ease seems indispensable to the implied conception of beautiful living (in the novel 'lowness' is significantly equated with lowly origins and spiritual ugliness with humble life). And just as his material world depends on the hard work of others, so his serenity—he must hold a record for unbroken serenity throughout a publishing life of forty years—seems to rest a little too contentedly on the strenuous labours of other non-serene minds. Professor Santayana has always been given to referring amusingly to what he calls the agonized conscience—the type of mind which produced Calvinism, Judaism and the other uncomfortable religions and philosophic systems; yet it seems improbable that the Catholic tradition he admires could have been created by Plato with the assistance of some Graeco-Roman Etonians. In a pre-War essay he characterized as 'narrow, strident and fanatical' Russell's 'refusal to entertain any pious reverence for the nature of things,' and as a criticism of the attitude implicit in Russell's brand of irony that is just; one may nevertheless feel that there may be too pious a reverence for the nature of things, and that Professor Santayana exhibits it in his novel. This could be brought out by a comparison between *The Last Puritan* and another recent philosophic novel, *The Root and the Flower* (L. H. Myers); just as that makes even so mature and thoughtful a work as *Passage to India* look provincial, so it makes *The Last Puritan* seem inadequate in its dealings with the moral life of man.

If we ask why the affirmations in Professor Santayana's novel take the form they do, we may find a clue in *Winds of Doctrine*:

> 'For Kant had a genteel tradition of his own, which he wished to remove to a place of safety, feeling that the empirical world had become too hot for it; and this place of safety was the

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> region of transcendental myth . . . To embrace this philosophy was regarded as the sign of profound metaphysical insight, although the most mediocre minds found no difficulty in embracing it. In truth it was a sign of having been brought up in the genteel tradition, of feeling it weak, and of wishing to save it.'

One might conclude from *The Last Puritan* that Professor Santayana too has a genteel tradition of his own that he feels to be in need of defence or oxygen. The nature of that tradition has been suggested above, and that it is on its last legs must be evident to everyone. Professor Santayana is probably the last very distinguished mind to cherish that tradition, which is the reason that this review is headed The Last Epicurean. Not 'Epicurean' with reference to the original Epicurus of course ; the adjective is intended delicately to suggest a relationship with the Oxford branch of the family. Pater, though his literary art was at the opposite extreme from Professor Santayana's, was also a victim of the feminine charm of Oxford. It is rumoured moreover that Professor Santayana voluntarily resided for some years on Boar's Hill, the very sanctuary, it would appear from what one reads and hears, of the English genteel tradition.

Q. D. LEAVIS.

CLEAR HORIZON, by Dorothy Richardson (Dent and the Cresset Press, 7/6).

This is the eleventh and latest, but not last, volume of the novel-cycle *Pilgrimage*, the first, *Pointed Roofs*, having appeared in 1915, when it fell like a rock from a height into the literary waters. Since then each succeeding volume has made less of a splash, and the latest is likely to part the surface with scarcely a ripple. Reading the extravagant praises that were heaped on the early volumes by distinguished *littérateurs* it is hard now to understand how they could have aroused so much excitement and enthusiasm. But her contemporary reputation was not a bogus one, like Stephen Phillips's, nor did it spring from a genuine perennial bad taste, like Rupert Brooke's. Her volumes were certainly important at the time of their first appearance, though

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it looks now as though (if these metaphorical liberties may be allowed) they were less a torrent in themselves than straws showing the course of a current. *Pilgrimage* has evidently less intrinsic than historical value; the third generation from Dr. Oliver Elton will have its author docketted for literary-history purposes as a ' precursor.' Miss Richardson was plainly an early if not very inspired employer of the ' stream of consciousness ' method, and she was undoubtedly an influence of sorts on at least one far greater novelist. In the earlier work of Virginia Woolf before her mature style crystallised out, amid signs of incomplete assimilation of Joyce and Meredith there are occasionally to be found sentences that might have been written by Miss Richardson; certainly it looks as though the latter might have provided the matrix for the characteristic ' feminine ' sentence which Mrs. Woolf claims to have been consciously trying to evolve as the unit of her medium.

The intrinsic interest of *Pilgrimage* is slight and best sampled in the first volume, which remains the strongest of the series. Thereafter it will be found to become increasingly small beer. For posterity, or such of it as studies literature for degrees, there will have to be an abridged edition like those of Miss Richardson's namesake for the same purpose. For the 'stream of consciousness ' method, like any other method, is dependent finally on the quality of the sensibility behind it, and to use successfully this particular method, which excludes implicit criticism and the variety afforded by the play of mind from the outside on to the subject - matter, it is indispensable that it should be backed by a distinguished, rich and profound personality. That Miss Richardson's is not so has become painfully apparent by now, without of course in any degree lessening the historical value of her achievement. Her outlook is narrowly limited by class and sex factors, as indeed Charlotte Brontë's, among others, was, but lacks the force and vitality which can make such limitations interesting. For instance, her pre-occupations date already as being those of a period when Woman—as distinct from individual women—was a matter for defiant assertion of interest; she seems by way of being nothing more than an expansion of the weaker side of Mrs. Woolf, and the impression one accordingly gets is one of a failure to mature. In Mrs. Woolf this weakness seems to be kept out of her best work, and never manifests itself

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at all in her novels as crudely as it does in *A Room of One's Own*, for example, while in the early *Night and Day* it actually flowers into a valuable kind of sensitiveness. In Miss Richardson however it is a pervasive weakness, the feminine self-consciousness that has to find an outlet in some form of assertion or demand; at that time it was for the right to vote, and now seems to have found its level in the right to love (Marie Stopes) and the right to lead an uninhibited life (Ethel Mannin) at which level and temperature it may well be left. The demand for mass rights can only be a source of embarrassment to intelligent women, who can be counted on to prefer being considered as persons rather than as a kind, just as they will wish to work out individual solutions to their problems, if they have any; nor are they likely to have more sympathy with the implicit appeal to ' We women ' than intelligent men have for the equivalent appeal to ' We men.' But apart from this kind of obsession, which demands a forbearance on historical grounds that it will take all the reader's patience to maintain, Miss Richardson's consciousness has little to offer. But she will be a gift to the research student of the two-thousands.

KING COFFIN, Conrad Aiken (Dent, 7/6).

The reviewer of Mr. Aiken's novels (he published one a year or so ago called *The Great Circle)* finds himself in a difficult position. Mr. Aiken is evidently a highly intelligent man with a good deal of close if not very profound observation of humanity at his disposal. He can write at whatever tempo he chooses and thoroughly understands the methods of novel-writing. He takes great pains and puts much thought into his work. Why then should a reviewer never want to read his novels twice, and doubt whether most people will ever want to read them even once? A feeling of regretful disappointment is the most lasting impression that his novels leave—perhaps because the author, having so many talents, lacks the essential talent of being able to justify the use he makes of them. Nevertheless his very virtues prevent him from achieving other kinds of success; he is too fastidious to make himself a bestseller like Somerset Maugham and too impersonal and disciplined to be a middlebrow favourite. Perhaps his novels don't proceed from the

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expression of more than a small part of his mind. The present novel, for instance, seems to be no more than the result of a bright idea derived from reading *Les Caves du Vatican* and seeing *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*. The idea of *l'acte gratuit*—murder for the sake of murder and quite without personal malice, to prove to the murderer his beyond-good-and-evil elevation—is evidently not an idea of the highest seriousness, or rather, to take it as highly serious is to betray what might be called an arrested adolescence in moral sensibility. Gide of course embeds the idea in a fantastic satire on Catholics and Freemasons and carries it off by sheer intellectual high spirits: he does not offer his novel as more than a slight piece of wit and its only drawback seems to be that he is not sure himself quite how seriously he takes the *acte gratuit* complex. *King Coffin* however is a whole-hearted study of the hero's maturing conception of the ' beauty ' of the idea that ' An action could have the purity of a work of art—it could be as abstact and absolute as a problem in algebra.' The hero therefore picks on a complete stranger and sets himself to spy into his life as fully as he can with the intention of ultimately murdering him. The *Doctor Caligari* contribution lies in the idea of evoking that semi-lunatic atmosphere of distortion, in the novel necessarily represented by an attempt to build up a world of abnormal moral values—e.g., where the Nietzschean hero is beginning to divulge the conception to a girl who loves him:

> ' The door creaked slightly open in a draught, he rose to shut it, shutting out the renewed sound of the radio from downstairs, and returned then to a suddenly sharpened sense of the fact that something really extraordinary was impending. The shape of it hung beautiful and ominous. A new relationship, a new dimension, the dreadful taste of eternity in a new horror, the sense of *sharing,* himself and this woman, in a deeper and darker world of which a pure terribleness would be the principle. He was seducing her—his genius was in the very act of seducing her—her entire attitude, at this moment, was precisely that of a woman to whom an adultery has been proposed. She was fascinated, she was frightened, her balance half lost she was half-consciously debating with herself whether to lose the rest, she knew that if she looked at him she would be destroyed. What fascinated her was the dimly guessed *thing,* the new and astonish-

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ing pattern into which she would be drawn with him . . . *Could* she share all the way, all the way to its logical culmination, his hatred and contempt for mankind?' etc. (p.57)

The hero with his name, which is Jasper (was anyone in the modern world ever called Jasper outside 19th century melodrama and popular fiction?) and his height, which is six feet two, and his ' extreme handsomeness, if not indeed beauty ' and green eyes and inscrutable superciliousness and so on, looks at first as though he will turn out to be a stalking-horse for satire, but alas, the deadly seriousness of the author becomes increasingly tiresome, and one has a sense of irritation and not relief when his hero, unlike Gide's, doesn't after all commit his ' pure murder ' but merely gasses himself instead.

BEANY-EYE, by David Garnett (Chatto & Windus, 5/-).

Beany-Eye is a much better piece of work than readers of this author's last four or five novels could possibly have expected. It will probably be a minor success, but a success at the opposite extreme from *Lady Into Fox* (which is characteristic of his original genre). The success of that depended on its unreality, the strength of this lies in its fidelity to life—*i.e.* reminiscence. Mr. Garnett's family have left plenty of published proof of their distinction, and if there had been even more of them in *Beany-Eye* and less of their not so talented descendant *Beany-Eye* would have been a more valuable book. The singularity in which Mr. Garnett formerly specialised, pervasive in his earlier novels, is here confined to the name-character. The fable is even slighter than usual, though fortunately what there is of it is not scattered and amorphous as in *No Love* and *The Sailor's Return;* the narrative here is of the film-scenario type—the scene where the entire cast dodges the madman round the house is certain to get the laughs it works for. The customary affectation of profundity with its implied symbolism is also mercifully absent, though on this account the book cannot expect to hold the sympathies of the innocent would-be sophisticated public as its predecessors did—one used to hear it argued that *Go She Must* and *The Sailor's Return must* have been allegorical or the reader

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couldn't have been moved so deeply (such a reader was of course incapable of doing the elementary practical criticism that would have revealed the fallacy). Correspondingly the earlier mannered style which, as *The Calendar* pointed out at the time, is not a style but a patchwork of imitations (Defoe, Richardson, Marryat, George Moore, T. F. Powys) has here been reduced to the highest common factor of simple narrative. It is a pity however that Mr. Garnett couldn't resist a sudden peroration which is evidently designed to shove the story up on to a higher plane. Mr. Garnett has a pretty ingenuity in this respect, and whereas this function was performed by the parrot (' "Time, gentlemen, please. Time" ') in *The Sailor's Return* and by the birds in *Go She Must* and by the Modern Consciousness in *No Love*, here it is merely Dickens in his poetic vein:

> ' The great ship moved and the tender moved, and my father looked first at the crowd lining the deck and then at the other crowd shouting and waving on the docks, and it seemed to him that the movement and the noise and the crowds and the ship carrying its hundreds of working people each one of whom had finished a chapter of disappointments and of failure and was setting out in hope of a new kind of life, that all these things and people, with the gulls and wind and sea, was what he had come for; the clue that he had been seeking.'

Of course there isn't any clue: the object of this factitious passage is to pump significance into an otherwise insignificant narrative. While making a nice Christmas gift (elegantly produced) *Beany-Eye* does not hold out hope of any serious development in this perennially youthful writer.

Q.D.L.

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CHINESE TESTAMENT, by S. Tretiakov (Gollancz, 8/6).
THE HOUSE OF EXILE, by Nora Waln (The Cresset Press, 5/-).

The issue of a cheap edition of *The House of Exile* makes an opportunity for calling attention to this remarkable book. Along with it must be mentioned a book which for teaching purposes supplements it, the *Chinese Testament* of the youth Tan Shih-hua, taken down from conversations by Mr. Tretiakov. ' His generation,' says Mr. Tretiakov, 'shows clearly the break-up of the social energies of the governing classes of the old China.' Tan Shih-hua was not a communist but, says the narrator, ' Chinese communists who have seen parts of this book, have said: " Here, indeed, is our childhood, our school, our life "—so typical does this story of Tan Shih-hua seem to the young Chinese intelligentsia of to-day.' It is therefore what the last volume of Pearl Buck's heavy-footed saga endeavours to be—an inside account of the state of mind of the well-born Chinese youth whose energies seem forced to take the form of breaking away from and thus helping to destroy the traditional pattern of living of his race. Shih-hua's father was an important revolutionary but while he was from home his son was reared in the Confucian homestead in Sczechuan. We are shown his schooling, his social background, his wedding, student life at Peking where he studied Russian, and the students' revolutionary activities, at which point the book stops because Mr. Tretiakov lost trace of Shih-hua.

Miss Waln's book is an account of her life from 1920 as adopted daughter of the House of Exile in Northern China, and of her further contacts with that family during her residence in China as a married woman. The House of Exile, wealthy, influential and honourable, incarnates the traditional ideal of Chinese family life. Miss Waln's book accordingly makes the most delightful reading, the more especially as she was completely in sympathy with the disciplined household she formed part of; Tan Shih-hua's reminiscences are necessarily painful reading, though his childish memories in the first half-dozen chapters form a picturesque background. Nevertheless it is as well to have as corrective to Miss Waln's idyllic picture such a vivid and obviously truthful account as Shih-hua's of, for example, the hatefulness that apparently often lay in an arranged marriage, just as it is instructive to have her account of the tyrannical students' revolts to offset his revolutionary zeal with which

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Mr. Tretiakov is entirely in sympathy. Sun Yat-sen passes through both books, with the accompaniment of the Kuomintang and its Russian advisers, and from opposite sides we see the activities of the anti-Japanese student Scouts and the anti-foreign riots.

Miss Waln says her purpose is ' just to tell of everyday life in a Chinese family.' As such one could not imagine the book could possibly be bettered, and it ought to be in all school libraries. Her family had traded with the Lin [not their real name] family in the 18th century, and in 1804 a letter was addressed to the Chinese merchant in Canton from the Quaker merchant in Philadelphia. ' It expressed satisfaction in the knowledge that any packet with his seal did not need examination to assure the receiver that its contents were of the promised quality. It regretted that conditions of the era did not permit the exchange of other than material goods. And ended with the hope that in later generations " when suspicion between peoples must certainly disappear " the Lins and Walns might exchange visits.' This letter was preserved by the Lins and shown to each generation, so the Family Elder told Miss Waln, ' not only because of its value as evidence of Lin Yan-ken's integrity, but as proof that all Westerners are not savages. Some can appreciate character even as other men.' When therefore a Lin descendent happened to be in America, he endeavoured to get into touch with the Walns, and in 1920 one succeeded: Miss Waln, who had long been a student of Chinese and was then at college, was invited to visit the branch of Lins known as the House of Exile which had been domiciled in North China for six-and-a-half centuries. There follows a delightful account of life in a great Chinese household—it included at the time eighty-three men, women and children—with a map of the homestead such as Shun-ko made for her adopted daughter. ' As she worked she explained, " The general plan of the house in which I was born and of all Chinese homes which I have visited, is the same as this. Homes here are on a similar system, whether of one court or one hundred. This is sensible. One knows on entering a homestead which way to go to find the place of books, the garden, the abode of the Oven God, or the residence of the Family Elder." ' An outline of the family history is given to explain the family traditions and the formation of the courts. The House of Exile are land-owners and therefore farmers, and we are next taken through the Farmer's Calendar the year round.

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We accompany Miss Waln to the various courtyards of women and children, we are shown the festivals as they come round and have described in dramatic scenes typical instances of birth, birthdays, death and marriages, with the rites and customs and mental attitudes that accompany them. They are not mere descriptions, for they are witnessed and participated in by the writer, who had to perfect her Chinese by command of the Lady of First Authority in the House who would allow no uncivilised language to be spoken in her courts. There is sufficient indication, in the person of Su-ling, the rebellious member of the Springtime Bower who had studied at the Sorbonne, of the break with tradition that the younger generation often represents. Miss Waln herself married an Englishman in Chinese government service, and at Nanking and Canton mixed with both the European and the Chinese governing classes on equal terms. There is an instructive correspondence between Miss Waln in Nanking and her mother-by-affection giving the former the benefit of Shun-ko's traditional wisdom and personal shrewdness as regards married life, and we subsequently have accounts of Miss Waln's presence at the Nanking Spring Sacrifices at the Palace for the Worship of Confucius and at the Summer Solstice festival at Canton. At Canton she resumes relations with the Lin family in the form of the main branch, which had been settled in Canton for one hundred and four generations before the House of Exile branched off.

Miss Waln's book is not another Chinese memoir by a Westerner. It has style, form and character, and is something of a work of art. Compared with the external novels-of-English-in-China of, say, Anne Bridge, it is written from the inside; compared with the novels that pretend to interpret Chinese life, such as Pearl Buck's, it reveals a finely cultivated intelligence and a great deal more detailed knowledge far more sensitively handled. In comparison with any of these novels indeed Miss Waln seems to write from the Chinese rather than from the European side—she draws a comparison incidentally between the domestic tradition and education she received from her Quaker grandmother and Swedish mother and its resemblance to the influence of Shun-ko on her later girlhood—evidently she was more at home with the Lins than on Shameen with the formal European society. Everyone who once reads her book will want to keep it on their shelves. *Chinese*

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Testament, however, suffers from being merely a record of disjointed reminiscences taken down by an instructor in Russian at Peking university during conversations with one of his pupils, and has the additional disadvantage of being a translation from the Russian. But for school use the two books are more instructive taken together: any teacher with his wits about him could work them in under History.

This is a minor example from *The House of Exile* of the way in which the threads of the book are manipulated; it is impossible to tell whether the incidents selected to form the pattern of the book are all literally true or whether they have another kind of truth only—that of being representative of actuality. Early on when Miss Waln is being shown round the courts

> 'Shun-ko stopped to explain a long spiral burning before a bronze Bird of Dawn:—
>
> '"This is the Time Stick. Camel-back, our gate-man, makes it each day of well-mixed sawdust and clay. He lights it by the stars. His fathers, for eleven generations, have measured time for the Lins. His young grandson proved last spring, when the old man was sick, that he has inherited the gift. They take the time from the sky and their own intuition. We regulate our Western-made watches by our Time Stick, and we amuse ourselves by setting them when we start to Peking so that we can compare them with the big Western clock there. The clock is a good timepiece. We have never found it more than a quarter of an hour wrong!"'

Subsequently the grandson mentioned is taken off by a raiding band of soldiers; he turns up ten years later, when the Lins are travelling back to the House of Exile with Miss Waln, as 'a general with his own regiments.'

> 'He had come out of Kansir to volunteer assistance in making Japan loosen her throttle grip on the Three Eastern Provinces. But, exiled and homesick for ten years, he was permitting himself the indulgence of the Moon Festival Holidays at his birthplace, as now that he was a general in comfortable circumstances it was fitting that he should pay his dutiful respects to his grandfather and have his marriage contracted.'

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They all return together, and the book concludes with the homecoming.

> 'Camel-back carefully barred the high Gate closing the Wall against the world before he received his grandson's kowtow. When the three prostrations were completed, he brushed the dust from his descendant's uniform and said, "You wear a general's uniform; but have you kept the power to take time from the Heavens?"
>
> "I have," the grandson said proudly, as though he too counted a general's power as nothing beside this inherited talent.
>
> "Ah, then to-night thou shalt set the time-sticks," his grandsire said, as one conferring an honour.'

THE SOUTH AFRICANS, by Sarah Gertrude Millin (Constable, 7/6).

Mrs. Millin's book first appeared in 1926 and after many reprintings was recently re-issued in a new edition enlarged and brought up to date (even to the inclusion of Fascist activities in South Africa). It remains an excellent introduction to a complicated subject. Written in a popular style without being in the least cheap or superficial, it is very readable ; the material is clearly presented under heads which explain the peoples in South Africa to-day, their relations to each other, the history of the country and the present political position, the cultural and economic situation, and the problems of the country. Such a book should be a boon to the teaching of the history-geography group of subjects in the upper forms of an intelligent school and ought to have found its way already into every school library. It is a pity that a similar book on Australia does not exist.

It is valuable because it is not written from a political or party or any official point of view: it is a cultural study, and this seems to be the only position that school-teachers can take up with a clear conscience and the certainty of profit to their pupils. Thus the cultural sketches of Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban that Mrs. Millin gives are far more educational than the accounts likely to be found in geography text-books. And she is not interested in what happened at the battle of Majuba so much as in the attitude

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today of South Africans of English descent to that event. She is never sentimental (sentimentality always offers itself as an easy way out of colour problems), and is in fact reasonable to the point of refusing to be optimistic, though on the other hand capable of a generous rage against ' the closed mind ' that leads many of her countrymen to refer casually to their coloured neighbours as ' niggers.'

Her method is to give a summary or outline of the relevant facts and then discuss simply the problems arising from these and the possible solutions and future results. Thus she provides a framework of sufficient history to explain the present racial situation and how its problems arose—the Indian problem in Natal (and the determined aversion of a similar Chinese problem), the problem of the Cape peoples and the Bastaard tribes generally, the course of anti-British Dutch feeling, the ' poor whites ' problem (the appropriate comparisons with the southern states of the U.S.A. and with India are made), the mine-workers of Johannesburg who form so large and indispensable a class that the city is afraid of them, and many others. Her attitude is unprejudiced and comment is implied rather than expressed, e.g., on winding up her account of the Indian problem in Africa:

> ' Even the coming of an Agent from India had not helped to raise the status of the Indians of the Union. Complaints had actually been made that the first Agent, Mr. Sastri, was so unnaturally superior to most Europeans that his presence in the Union falsified the accepted idea of the distinction between Europeans and Indians, and was therefore deleterious.'

An intelligent teacher could do a great deal with the hints she throws out with information attached, using them as jumping-off points for more general conclusions and wider applications, for instance her information about the encroachment of the European ideal on the Bantu or kraal ideal, whose ' *esprit de corps* is manifested in a directly opposite way from that of, say the English public school and Mr. Kipling . . . It is merely a question of which tradition seems to work out better.' And here we have the simplest and concisest possible expression of a situation which is by no means confined to South Africa:

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> ' Every European in South Africa begins at a step above his natural level. And he has to begin like that. For at the base of existence, thrusting the white man upwards, stands the Kaffir. And, at the same time, the Kaffir is uncivilised and underpaid and has few wants, and the result is that the whole structure of life is too thinly supported, and there is danger in the overcrowding at the higher levels.'

The cultural situation is what Mrs. Millin naturally (she is of course the well-known South African novelist) feels to be of first importance, at once the product of and the key to the rest. It emerges here and there throughout the book, often in what seem at first like casual comments, as in the comparison between Cape Town and Johannesburg:

> ' There is, after all, something in this being old. Cape Town has a respect for culture. It possesses the finest library South of the Equator, an art gallery, and a museum of antique South African furniture. It attempts a mild Bohemianism. It talks about the latest books. It supports a municipal orchestra which has had the courage to tour England. It respects its professors. In Johannesburg a university professor is nobody in particular. In Cape Town he has a social status. And in Cape Town books are bought, and it is considered the right thing to attend concerts. There is also a tradition of family in Cape Town. Some of its people possess great-grandfathers.'

Similiarly she observes that ' there are no idle rich in South Africa and no leisured classes,' it being ' a middle-class country—excluding poor whites and the natives.' Immediately afterwards we note that ' The fact that there are no leisured classes in South Africa prevents also the incidence of a deep culture.' Later on, with reference to the boom in all things South African, we are told

> ' Even books by South African writers presently came to be read. One went into a bookshop and asked for " a " South African book. And as every South African book was compared by both publisher and critic with Olive Schreiner's *Story of an African Farm,* what, after all, did it matter which book one chose? Any book was a good book.'

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And in a general commentary on the absence of achievement in the arts in South Africa, after remarking that the South African artist is ' denied example and inspiration,' she proceeds to note the part the public plays in this situation:

> ' For it is not true that taste is born. One does not even naturally know what one likes. One has to be told. Taste is, as a general rule, created by intimacy, by habit and by imitation.'

Decidedly Mrs. Millin is an intelligent woman.

THE GOLDEN GRINDSTONE. Recorded by Angus Graham (Chatto & Windus, 10/6).

This book is the record, taken down during conversation, of the Arctic experiences of a well-known Quebec character, Mr. George M. Mitchell, who set out from Toronto for the Yukon during the gold-fever at the end of last century. Besides being rich entertainment for the adult this book has another use. Mr. Graham has done a service to the intelligent schoolmaster who wants to introduce anthropology and sociology in some elementary form into his boys' curriculum. It provides a fruitful starting-point for the study, at the classroom level, of such an important educational topic as the nature of civilization, in the form of a comparison between a primitive (Red Indian) way of living and the modern white man's life. Mr. Mitchell, a wise and shrewd man as well as an able pioneer, had a variety of adventures which incidentally furnish detailed accounts of the life of would-be gold prospectors in the Arctic, of Hudson's Bay Company factors (intelligent comparisons noted between French and English specimens—e.g. of Fort Simpson . . . ' The whole place was in fact a monument to what is called the " adaptability " of the Englishman abroad—the faculty of faking the externals of his old life so skilfully that the need for any personal adaptation may be completely ignored '), and of Eskimo and Indians. Mr. Mitchell broke a leg in the Arctic and had to be left with the Loucheux tribe, who ultimately got him safely back to a fort. He was lucky enough to have fallen in with Indians who had had no contact with the whites beyond an annual visit to the remote fort in order to exchange their furs for goods (' all of the very highest quality ') and to get christened or married there; they

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were so primitive that they had not evolved barbs to their fish-hooks, and had in this isolation retained nearly all their traditional manners and habits. Recognition is made of the paternal character of the Hudson's Bay Company's influence, which seems at that time to have been wholly for the good. Mr. Mitchell ultimately came to feel the deepest respect for the fine qualities of the Loucheux, their character, manners, arts and resourceful crafts. He describes clearly and without any inflation the life he lived with them and the knowledge he obtained of their outlook—he is evidently himself a man of impressive character and abilities, and it is not surprising that he was made blood-brother to the chief. The stamp of the narrator upon the book (Mr. Graham has managed the recording with rare tact and self-effacement) and the wealth of first-hand observation make it far more attractive than more pretentious books on the same subjects, and the exciting incidents imbedded in it are certain to hold the interest of the adolescent. There is a fine account, for instance, of how it feels to be alone and hunted by a pair of wolves, and the chapter on 'Dogs' should be a wholesome corrective to Jack London and the usual adventure stories of the Far North. The account of the Eskimo (Mr. Mitchell sees them from the point of view of his blood-brothers their traditional enemies) can be supplemented by *Arctic Village* (by Robert Marshall, Jarrolds, 18/-). *The Golden Grindstone* ought to be immensely successful as a prize-book in the enlightened school (if enlightened schools have prizes). An example of Mr. Graham's method of recording:

> 'Now I want to tell you that although Francis [the chief] had never sat up at a table in his life before, nor used a knife and fork in our way, his manners were damn well proper. And he did it too without any of us feeling that he was watching us. And then again, to let you see how keenly an Indian observes, I found out when I was with them months afterwards that he could describe clearly to the other Indians everything that was in the cabin, and where it was; and yet he never seemed to be investigating anything in particular—not, my dear Graham, as I am now vulgarly investigating everything in your flat! We could never marvel enough at this Indian's dignity and good looks.'

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